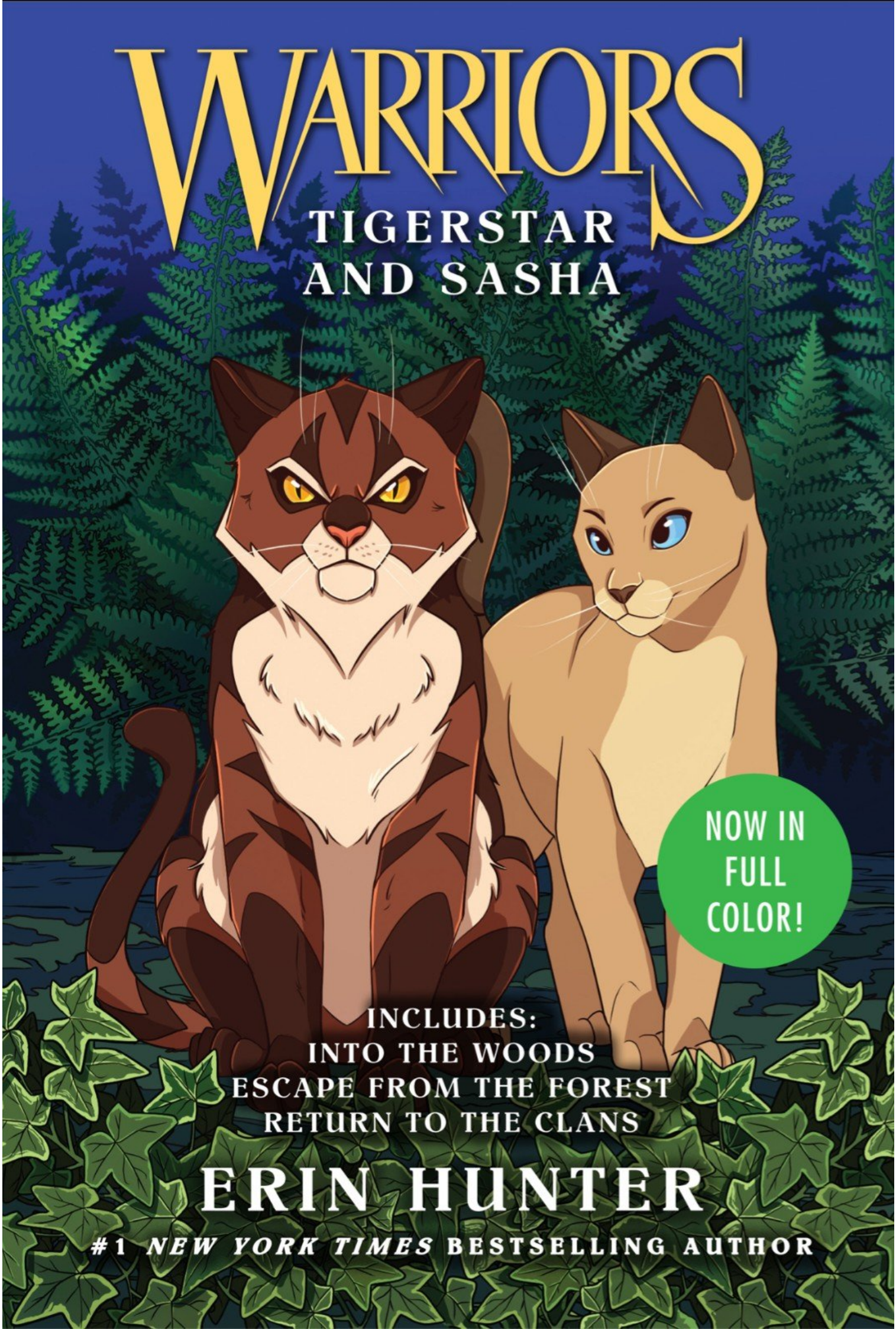
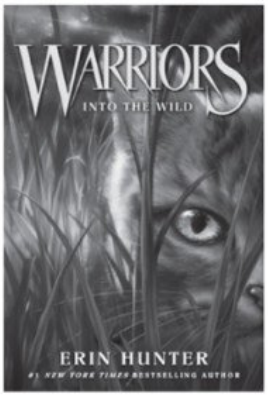
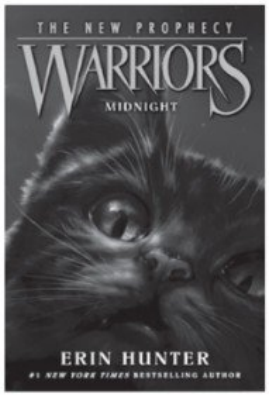
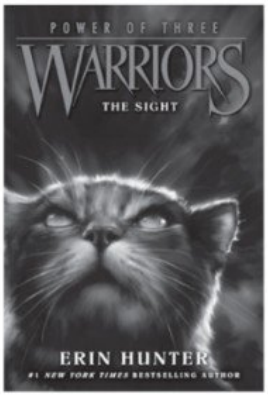
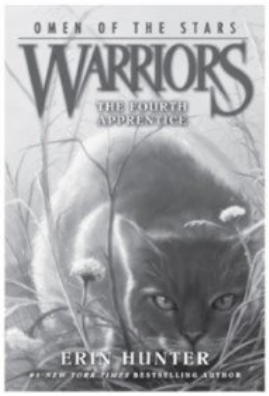

WARRIORS
TIGERSTAR AND SASHA
NOW IN FULL COLOR!
INCLUDES:
INTO THE WOODS
ESCAPE FROM THE FOREST
RETURN TO THE CLANS
ERIN HUNTER
#1 NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLING AUTHOR

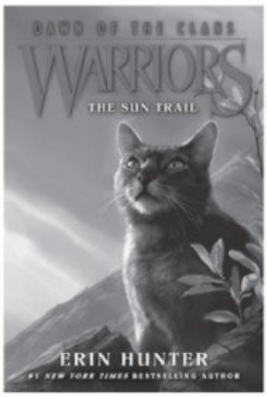
— DIVE INTO THE WARRIORS WORLD! —

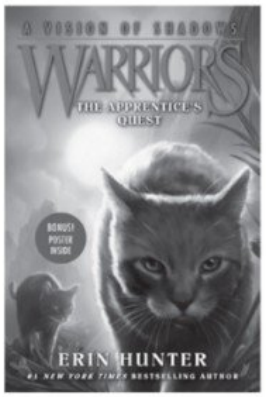


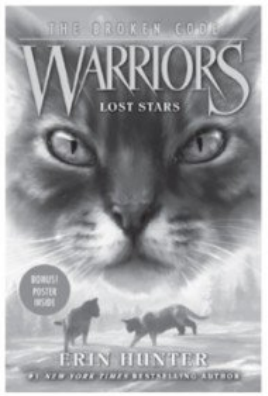


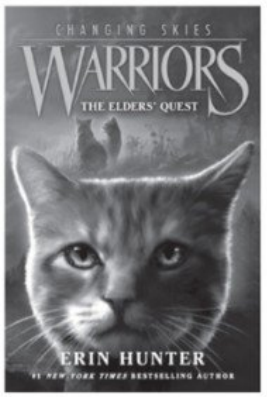




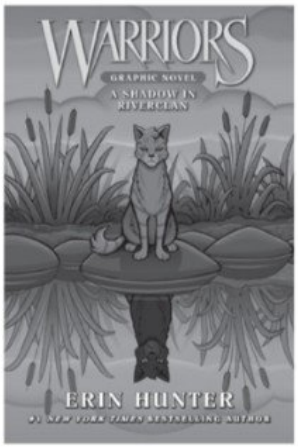


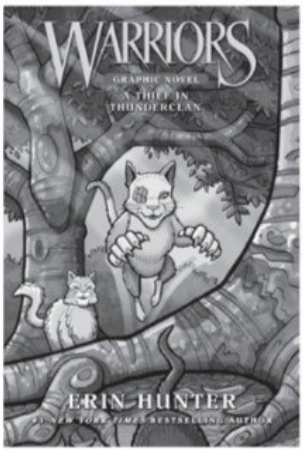






DON'T MISS THESE OTHER WARRIORS GRAPHIC NOVELS





WARRIORS

TIGERSTAR & SASHA

CREATED BY
ERIN HUNTER

WRITTEN BY
DAN JOLLEY

ART BY
DON HUDSON

COLORS BY
DANIELLE WEIRES

HAMBURG // LONDON // LOS ANGELES // TOKYO

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Created by Erin Hunter

Written by Dan Jolley

Art by Don Hudson

Colors by Danielle Weires

Cover Art - Danielle Weires
Digital Tones - Lincy Chan
Lettering - Lucas Rivera

Editor - Lillian Diaz-Przybyl
Digital Imaging Manager - Chris Buford
Pre-Production Supervisor - Lucas Rivera
Managing Editor - Vy Nguyen
Creative Director - Anne Marie Horne
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TOKYOPOP Inc.
5900 Wilshire Blvd. Suite 2000
Los Angeles, CA 90036

E-mail: info@TOKYOPOP.com
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Into the Woods

Escape from the Forest

Return to the Clans

WARRIORS

TIGERSTAR & SASHA

#1: INTO THE WOODS

COME BACK!

DON'T LEAVE ME!
SO, UH... THAT'S YOUR CAT, IS IT? WITH YOU AND YOUR WIFE?
YES.
WE...WE DIDN'T HAVE CHILDREN, YOU SEE.
BUT WE CAN'T KEEP PETS AT THE HOME.
NO...NO!

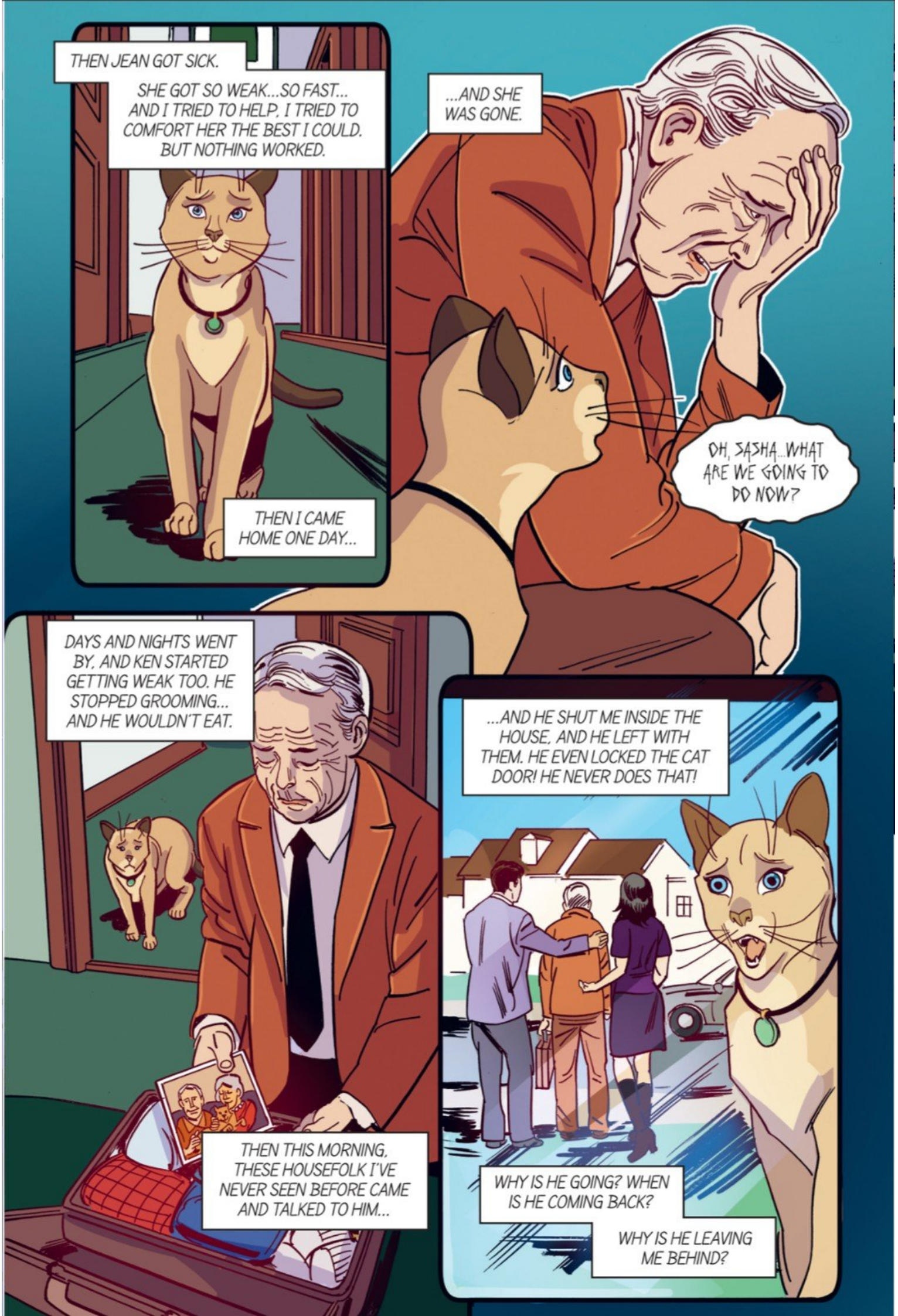
COME BACK... PLEASE...!

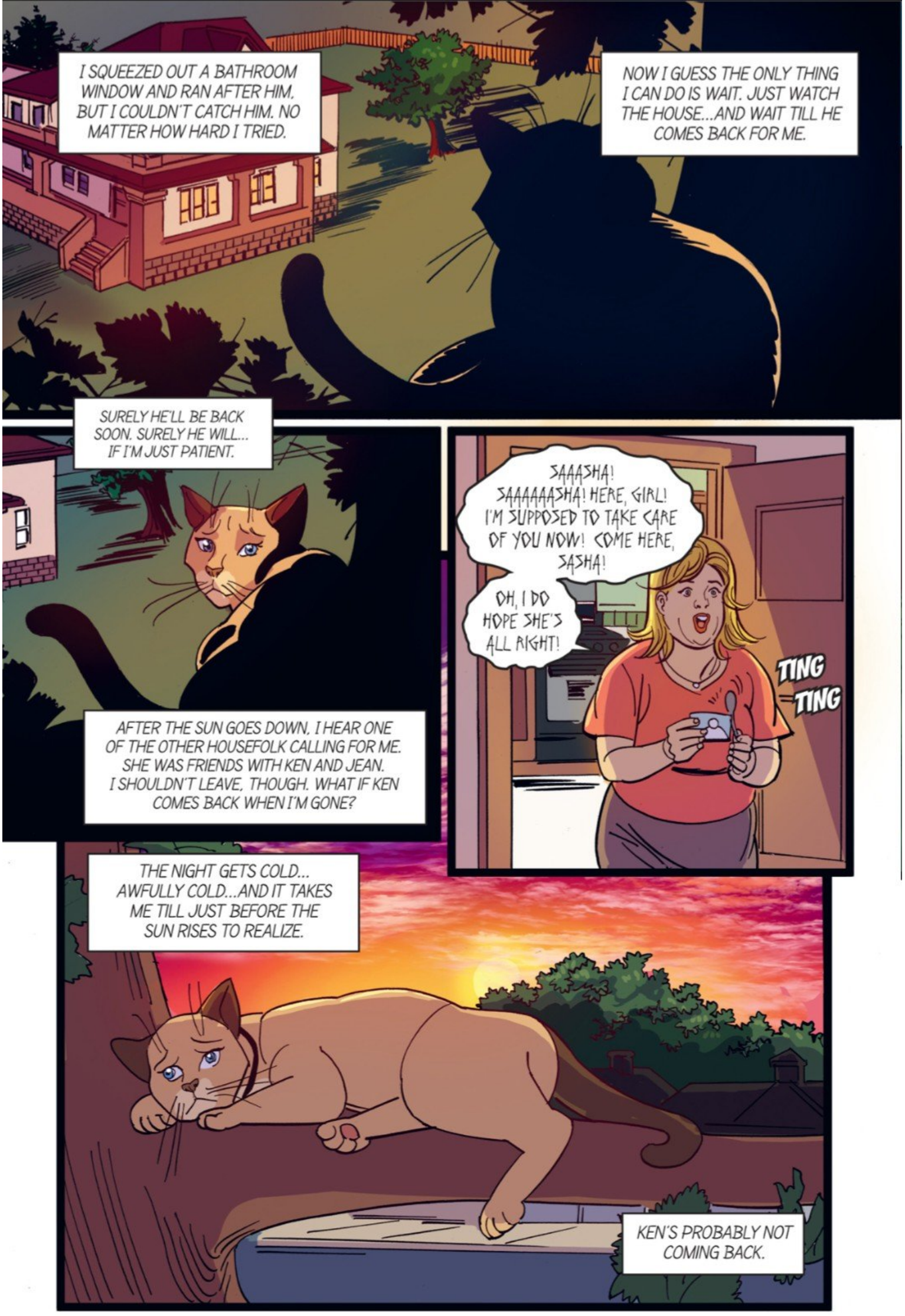
COME BACK.

MY NAME IS SASHA, AND I...

...I DON'T KNOW WHAT TO DO.

MY WHOLE LIFE I LIVED WITH MY HOUSEFOLK.
I NEVER REALLY KNEW WHAT THEY WERE SAYING, EXACTLY...BUT I KNEW THEIR NAMES.
KEN AND JEAN.
I SPENT EVERY DAY WITH THEM...
...AND THEN EVERY NIGHT THEY LET ME OUT SO I COULD EXPLORE.
I DON'T THINK THEY KNEW ABOUT ALL THE TREES I CLIMBED...THE SQUIRRELS I HUNTED...THE FRIENDS I MADE.
THEY JUST LOVED ME, AND WANTED ME TO BE HAPPY.

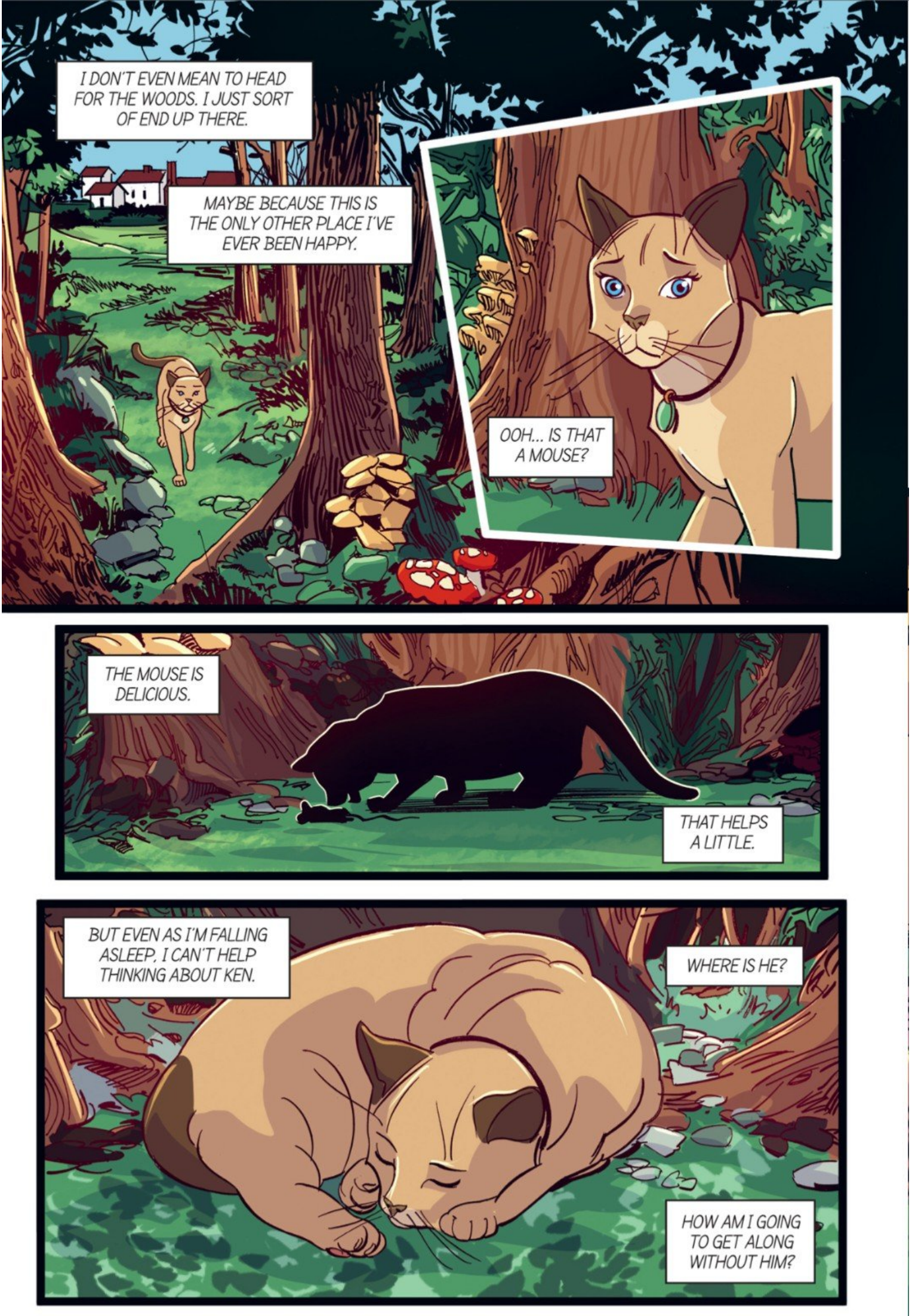

THEN JEAN GOT SICK.
SHE GOT SO WEAK...SO FAST... AND I TRIED TO HELP, I TRIED TO COMFORT HER THE BEST I COULD. BUT NOTHING WORKED.
THEN I CAME HOME ONE DAY...
...AND SHE WAS GONE.
OH, SASHA...WHAT ARE WE GOING TO DO NOW?
DAYS AND NIGHTS WENT BY, AND KEN STARTED GETTING WEAK TOO. HE STOPPED GROOMING... AND HE WOULDN'T EAT.
THEN THIS MORNING, THESE HOUSEFOLK I'VE NEVER SEEN BEFORE CAME AND TALKED TO HIM...
...AND HE SHUT ME INSIDE THE HOUSE, AND HE LEFT WITH THEM. HE EVEN LOCKED THE CAT DOOR! HE NEVER DOES THAT!
WHY IS HE GOING? WHEN IS HE COMING BACK?
WHY IS HE LEAVING ME BEHIND?


I SQUEEZED OUT A BATHROOM WINDOW AND RAN AFTER HIM, BUT I COULDN'T CATCH HIM. NO MATTER HOW HARD I TRIED.
NOW I GUESS THE ONLY THING I CAN DO IS WAIT. JUST WATCH THE HOUSE...AND WAIT TILL HE COMES BACK FOR ME.
SURELY HE'LL BE BACK SOON. SURELY HE WILL... IF I'M JUST PATIENT.
AFTER THE SUN GOES DOWN, I HEAR ONE OF THE OTHER HOUSEFOLK CALLING FOR ME. SHE WAS FRIENDS WITH KEN AND JEAN. I SHOULDN'T LEAVE, THOUGH. WHAT IF KEN COMES BACK WHEN I'M GONE?
SAAASHA! SAAAAAASHA! HERE, GIRL! I'M SUPPOSED TO TAKE CARE OF YOU NOW! COME HERE, SASHA!
OH, I DO HOPE SHE'S ALL RIGHT!
TING
TING
THE NIGHT GETS COLD... AWFULLY COLD...AND IT TAKES ME TILL JUST BEFORE THE SUN RISES TO REALIZE.
KEN'S PROBABLY NOT COMING BACK.

I CAN'T GET INSIDE THE HOUSE. THE WINDOW'S CLOSED NOW. BUT... I DON'T REALLY WANT TO GET INSIDE.
NOT IF KEN'S NOT THERE.
BUT WHERE DO I GO NOW?
HI, SASHA! HOW ARE YOU TODAY?
THAT'S MY FRIEND SHNUKY, WITH ONE OF HER HOUSEFOLK.
I ALMOST WALK ON BY WITHOUT ANSWERING HER.

NOT SO GREAT, SHNUKY. MY...THE... MY LAST HOUSEFOLK IS GONE NOW.
SASHA, I'M SO SORRY!
OH! YOU KNOW WHAT YOU COULD DO? YOU COULD LIVE WITH US! MY HOUSEFOLK ALREADY LOVE YOU, Y'KNOW!

THANKS...BUT NO THANKS. I WANT MY OWN HOUSEFOLK BACK.
I'M NOT READY TO HAVE NEW ONES. I'D RATHER JUST BE ON MY OWN FOR A WHILE.
OH. O-OKAY. WELL, COME BACK AND VISIT, ALL RIGHT?


I DON'T EVEN MEAN TO HEAD FOR THE WOODS. I JUST SORT OF END UP THERE.
MAYBE BECAUSE THIS IS THE ONLY OTHER PLACE I'VE EVER BEEN HAPPY.
OOH... IS THAT A MOUSE?
THE MOUSE IS DELICIOUS.
THAT HELPS A LITTLE.
BUT EVEN AS I'M FALLING ASLEEP, I CAN'T HELP THINKING ABOUT KEN.
WHERE IS HE?
HOW AM I GOING TO GET ALONG WITHOUT HIM?

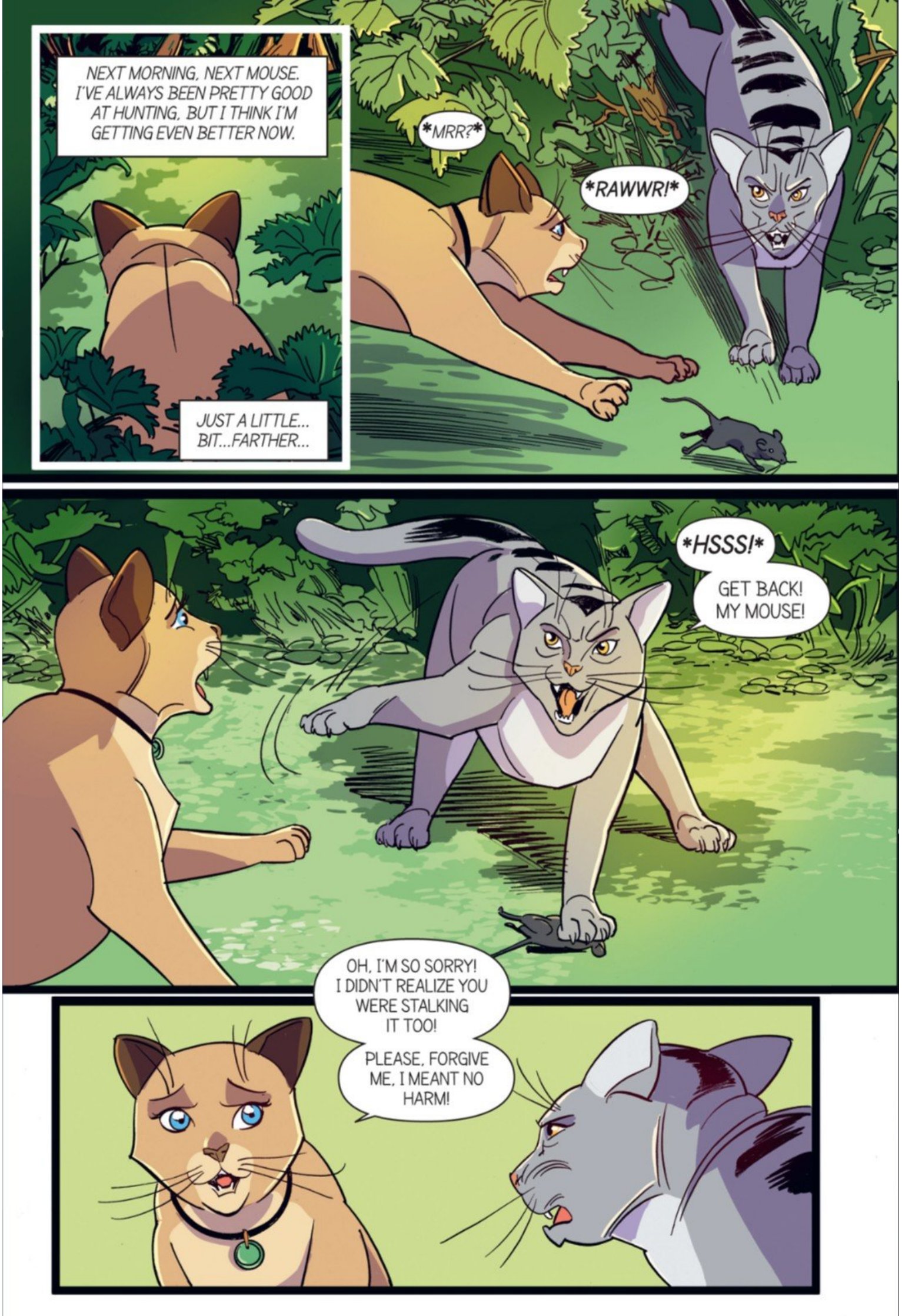
HOW DO I TAKE CARE OF MYSELF?
UGH. THAT'S NO WAY TO SLEEP.
IF I'M GOING TO DO THIS, I'VE GOT TO FIND A PLACE OF MY OWN.
SOMEWHERE I CAN MAKE AT LEAST A LITTLE COZY.

PERFECT.
I CAN SLEEP HERE...

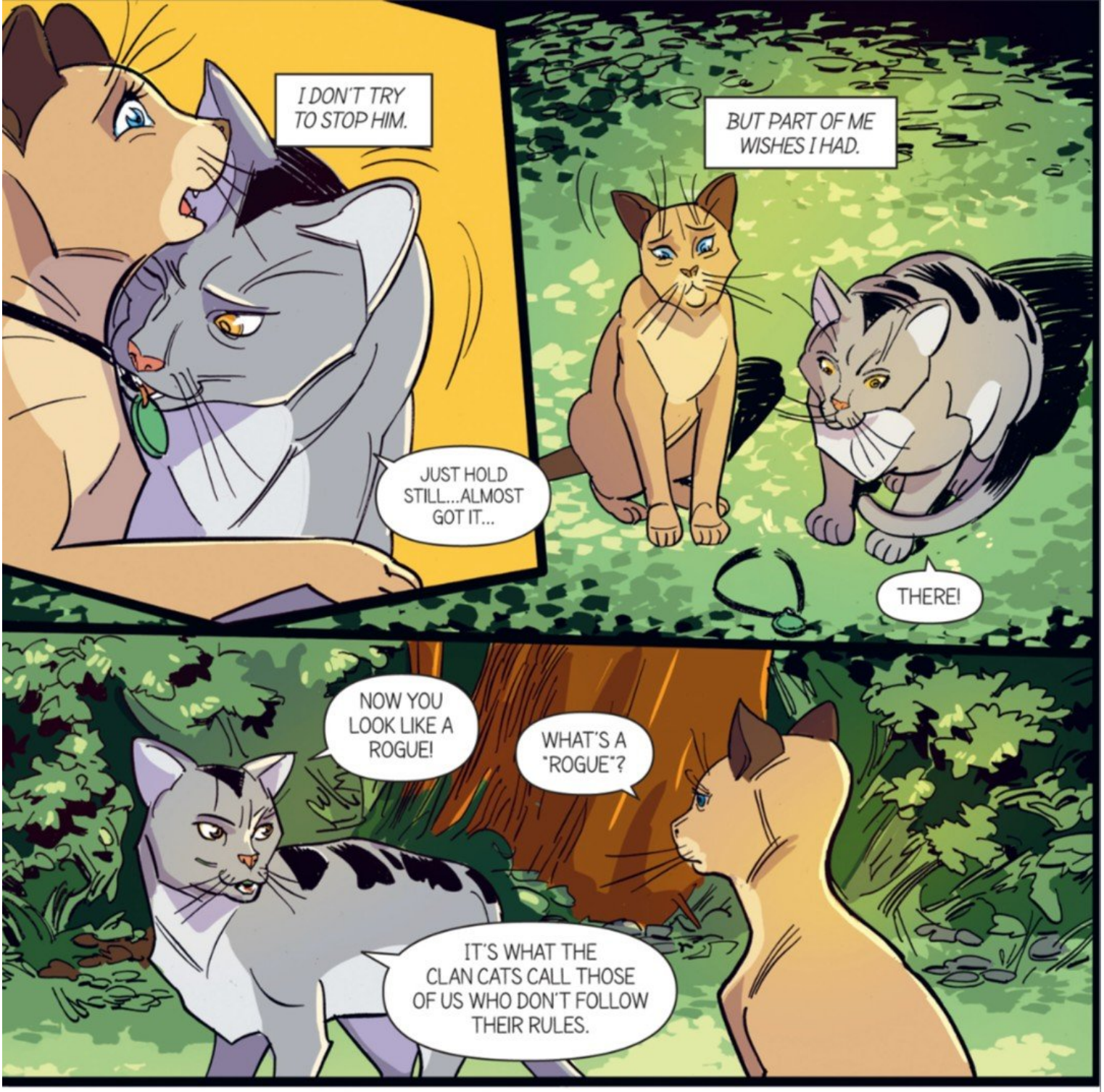
...AND BEING NEXT TO THIS PATH, MAYBE I CAN SEE KEN.
IF HE COMES LOOKING FOR ME.
IF...

WELL, IT'S NOT EXACTLY ONE OF JEAN'S BLANKETS.
BUT IT'LL DO.

IT'S COLD TONIGHT. COLDER THAN LAST NIGHT.
BUT THAT'S OKAY.
MAYBE...MAYBE...STRIKING OUT ON MY OWN LIKE THIS WON'T BE SO BAD.
THERE'S NO SHORTAGE OF PREY. THAT'S FOR SURE.
I'M GOING TO BE FINE.
JUST FINE.


NEXT MORNING, NEXT MOUSE. I'VE ALWAYS BEEN PRETTY GOOD AT HUNTING, BUT I THINK I'M GETTING EVEN BETTER NOW.
JUST A LITTLE... BIT...FARTHER...
MRR?
RAWWR!
HSSS!
GET BACK! MY MOUSE!
OH, I'M SO SORRY! I DIDN'T REALIZE YOU WERE STALKING IT TOO!
PLEASE, FORGIVE ME, I MEANT NO HARM!

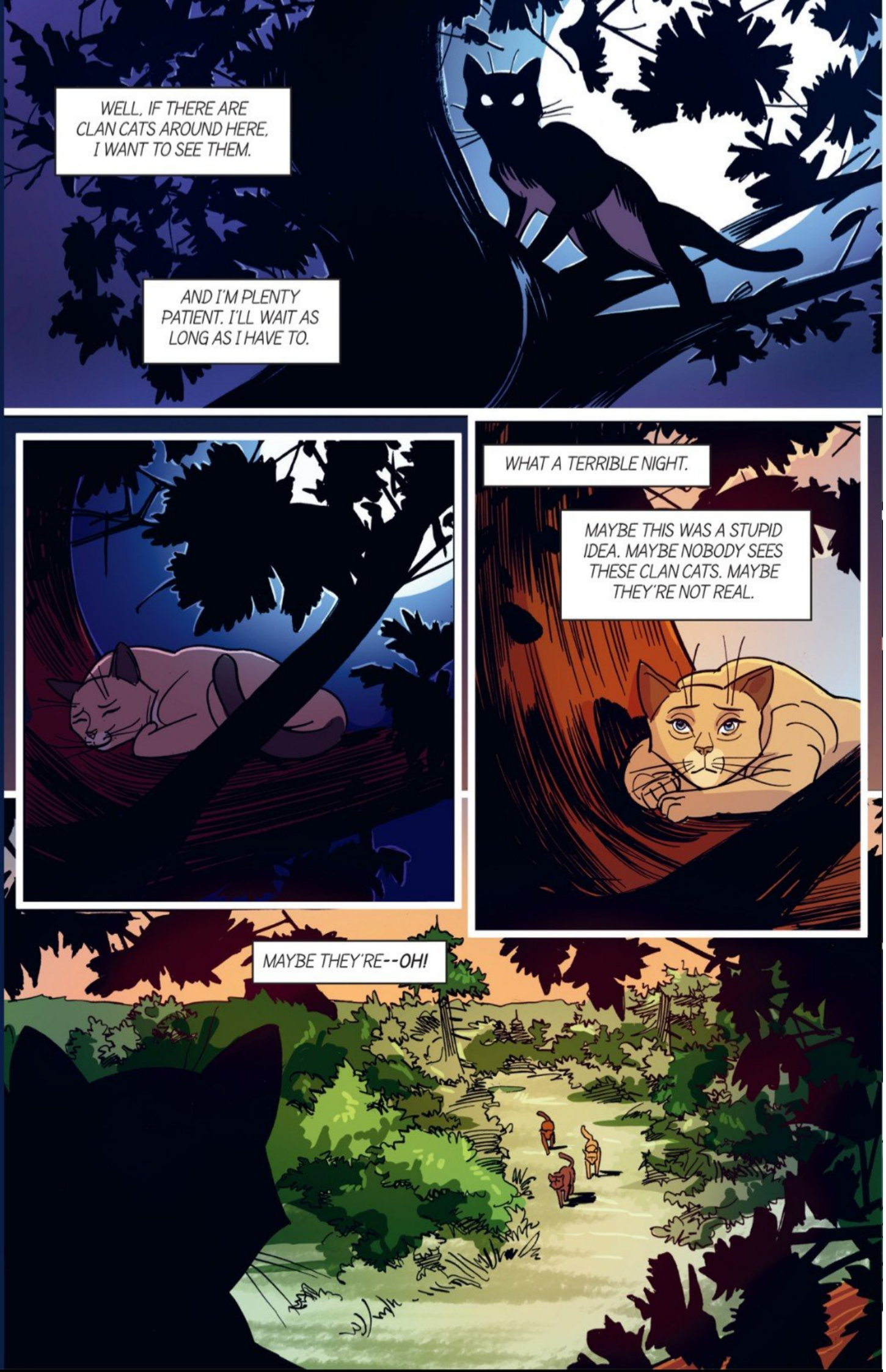
WELL...HUH.
I GUESS I COULD SHARE IT WITH YOU.
MY NAME'S PINE. WHAT'S YOURS?
I'M SASHA.
NO...I JUST GOT HERE.
I MADE MYSELF A DEN OVER NEAR THE PATH.
I HAVEN'T SEEN YOU AROUND BEFORE, SASHA.
DEN? WHY WOULD YOU NEED A DEN? YOU'RE A KITTYPET!
I DON'T KNOW THIS WORD. "KITTYPET." PINE SAYS KITTYPETS LIVE IN HOUSES, WITH HOUSEFOLK. HE CALLS THEM "TWOLEGS."
I TELL HIM WHAT HAPPENED TO JEAN AND KEN. AND I TELL HIM I'M NOT A KITTYPET ANYMORE.
HE'S NOT EXACTLY WHAT YOU'D CALL SYMPATHETIC.
WELL. TIME TO MOVE ON, THEN!
YOU NEED TO GET RID OF THAT COLLAR.
MY COLLAR? WHY?
BECAUSE ONLY KITTYPETS WEAR COLLARS. IF YOU'RE GOING TO LIVE IN THE WOODS, THE COLLAR'S GOT TO GO. HERE, I'LL HELP.


I DON'T TRY TO STOP HIM.
BUT PART OF ME WISHES I HAD.
JUST HOLD STILL...ALMOST GOT IT...
THERE!
NOW YOU LOOK LIKE A ROGUE!
WHAT'S A "ROGUE"?
IT'S WHAT THE CLAN CATS CALL THOSE OF US WHO DON'T FOLLOW THEIR RULES.

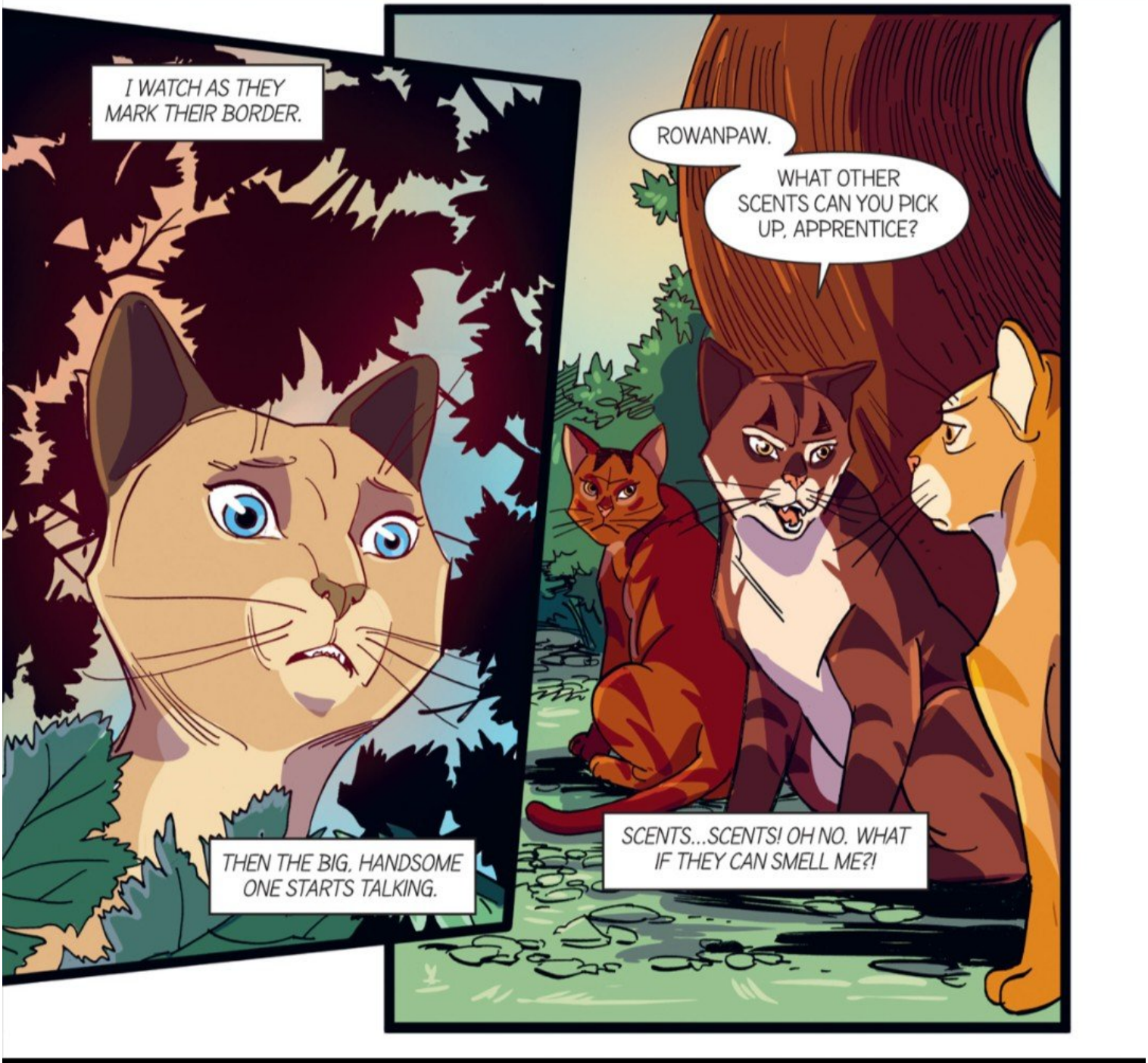
I'M SORRY, I'M CONFUSED. WHAT DO YOU MEAN BY "CLANS"?

GROUPS OF WILD CATS, OUT IN THE FOREST. THEY LIVE PAST THAT CROOKED TREE.
EACH CLAN HAS ITS OWN SECTION OF THE WOODS, AND ONLY THEY CAN HUNT THERE. THEY'LL FIGHT ANYBODY TO KEEP 'EM OUT.
CLAN CATS ARE FIERCE, LET ME TELL YOU. SEE THESE SCARS? I KNOW FIRSTHAND HOW FIERCE THEY ARE.
YOU BE CAREFUL OF THE CLANS, SASHA.
THEY DON'T THINK MUCH OF KITTYPETS.

JEAN AND KEN GAVE ME THAT COLLAR. I'M NOT READY TO THROW IT AWAY JUST YET.
BUT COLLARS ASIDE, I CAN'T STOP THINKING ABOUT WHAT PINE SAID... ABOUT THESE CLANS.
WOW...I'VE NEVER SMELLED SO MANY DIFFERENT CATS!
BEFORE I KNOW IT, I'M OUT AT THE CROOKED TREE.
AND THEN HERE...THE SCENT IS SO STRONG!
I UNDERSTAND IN A FLASH.
THIS IS A BORDER. A BORDER TO ONE OF THE TERRITORIES PINE WAS TALKING ABOUT.

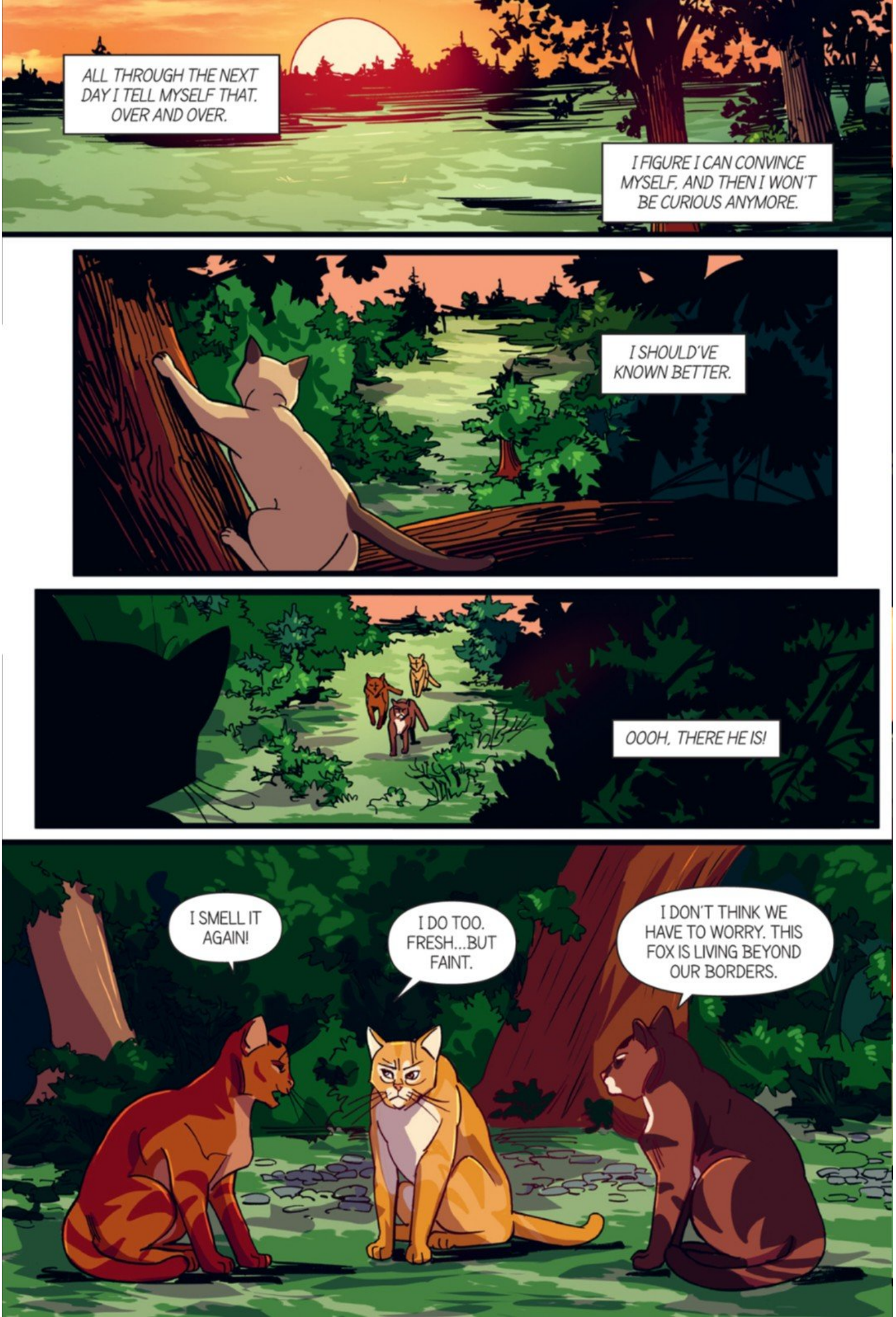

WELL, IF THERE ARE CLAN CATS AROUND HERE, I WANT TO SEE THEM.
AND I'M PLENTY PATIENT. I'LL WAIT AS LONG AS I HAVE TO.
WHAT A TERRIBLE NIGHT.
MAYBE THIS WAS A STUPID IDEA. MAYBE NOBODY SEES THESE CLAN CATS. MAYBE THEY'RE NOT REAL.
MAYBE THEY'RE--OH!

MAYBE I'LL JUST SIT RIGHT HERE AND BE QUIET NOW...

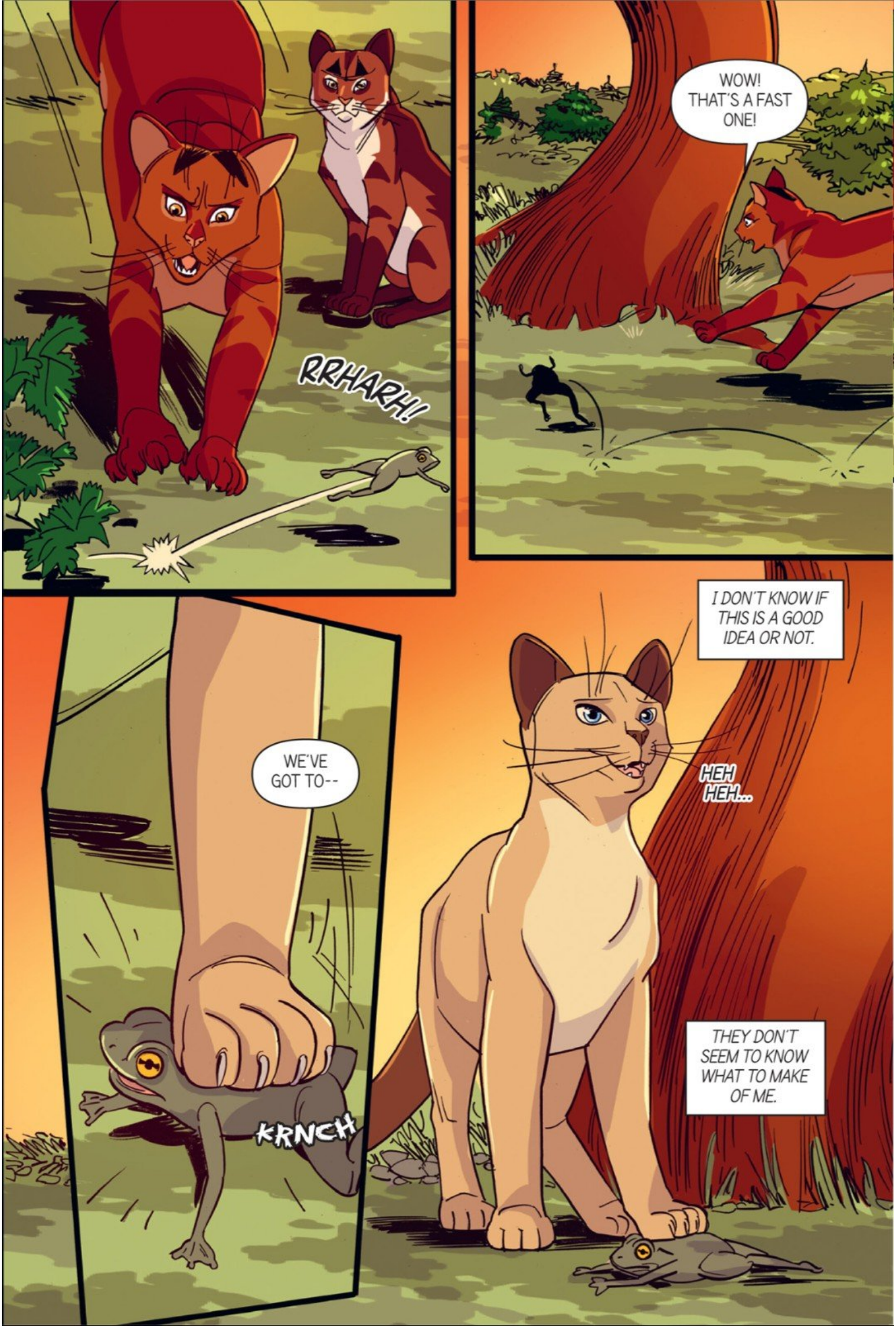

I WATCH AS THEY MARK THEIR BORDER.
THEN THE BIG, HANDSOME ONE STARTS TALKING.
ROWANPAW.
WHAT OTHER SCENTS CAN YOU PICK UP, APPRENTICE?
SCENTS...SCENTS! OH NO. WHAT IF THEY CAN SMELL ME?!

IT'S FOX. TIGERSTAR, IT'S FOX!
THE HANDSOME CAT IS CALLED TIGERSTAR? HOW DRAMATIC!
VERY GOOD. THE SCENT IS FAINT, WASHED MOSTLY AWAY BY A LIGHT RAIN, YET ROWANPAW DETECTED IT EASILY.
YOU'VE TAUGHT YOUR APPRENTICE WELL, JAGGED-TOOTH.
THANK YOU, TIGERSTAR.
CONTINUE THE PATROL.
THERE'S SOMETHING ABOUT THIS BIG, STRONG CAT...
THE FOX IS NO THREAT TO US.
AS YOU WISH.
I JUST CAN'T TAKE MY EYES OFF HIM!

THESE CLAN CATS...THEY MIGHT LIVE IN THE FOREST, AND FIGHT TO SURVIVE...BUT AT LEAST THEY HAVE EACH OTHER.
I'M ENVIOUS. WHO DO I HAVE? NO ONE, THAT'S WHO. I--
--DOES HE...IS HE LOOKING AT ME?
NO...NO. THEY'RE GOING. WHAT AM I THINKING?
IF I CAN'T HAVE JEAN AND KEN BACK, I'D RATHER BE ALONE. I DON'T NEED NEW FRIENDS. NOT PINE. NOT TIGERSTAR.
NOT ANYONE.


ALL THROUGH THE NEXT DAY I TELL MYSELF THAT. OVER AND OVER.
I FIGURE I CAN CONVINCE MYSELF, AND THEN I WON'T BE CURIOUS ANYMORE.
I SHOULD'VE KNOWN BETTER.
OOOH, THERE HE IS!
I SMELL IT AGAIN!
I DO TOO. FRESH...BUT FAINT.
I DON'T THINK WE HAVE TO WORRY. THIS FOX IS LIVING BEYOND OUR BORDERS.

LISTEN! PREY. THERE.
ROWANPAW, FOLLOW.
YES!
LOW TO THE GROUND, BUT NOT TOO LOW.
YOU WANT YOUR WEIGHT DISTRIBUTED EVENLY, BUT YOU DON'T WANT TO CAUSE LEAVES TO RUSTLE.
RIGHT, OKAY.
HUH? OH... RIGHT, FROGS ARE...UH...
...NASTY.
AND YET PREY IS PREY, DISTASTEFUL OR NOT. ISN'T THAT RIGHT?
UM. YES! ABSOLUTELY.
WAIT...
Sniff sniff
ECCH. IT'S FROG.


RRHARH!
WOW! THAT'S A FAST ONE!
I DON'T KNOW IF THIS IS A GOOD IDEA OR NOT.
HEH HEH...
WE'VE GOT TO--
KRNCH
THEY DON'T SEEM TO KNOW WHAT TO MAKE OF ME.

BUT THE LOOK ON THE BIG, HANDSOME CAT'S FACE IS PRICELESS.
GHRRRHH!
RRHAOWRRH!
RELAX, YOU TWO.
SHE'S NO THREAT.
I THINK THIS SLIPPED THROUGH YOUR PAWS...?

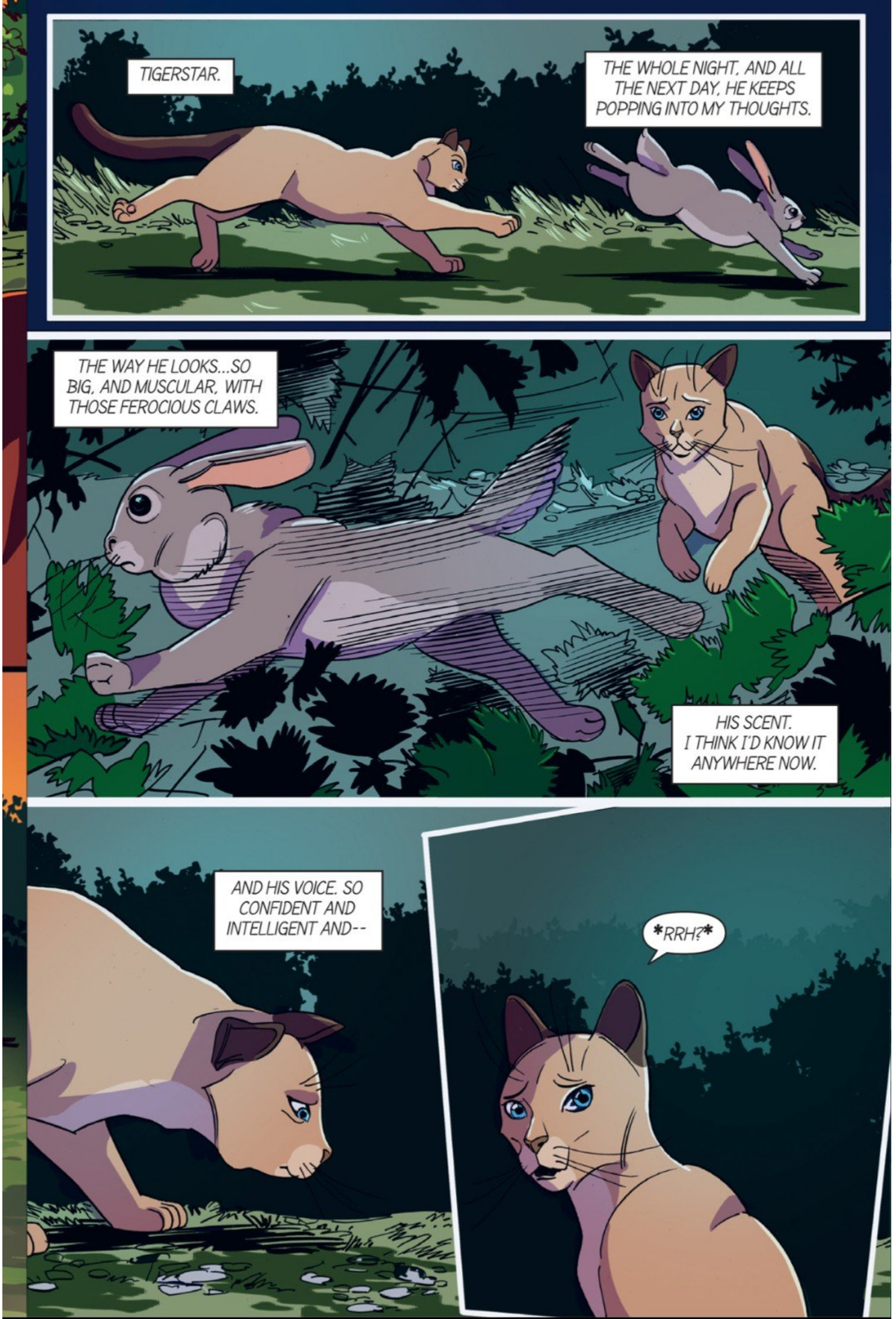
GO ON. TAKE THIS FRESH-KILL WE'VE BEEN SO GENEROUSLY OFFERED.
I'LL CATCH UP WITH YOU.

YOU WERE HERE YESTERDAY, WEREN'T YOU? I RECOGNIZE YOUR SCENT.
YES, I WAS HERE.

DO YOU KNOW THIS IS THE BORDER OF SHADOWCLAN TERRITORY? YOU MUST NOT CROSS IT, OR STEAL OUR PREY.
OTHERWISE, NEXT TIME I'LL LET MY WARRIORS RIP YOUR FUR.
I JUST MET THIS CAT. I DON'T KNOW HIM. BUT SOMETHING ABOUT HIM CONVINCES ME...

...HE DOESN'T REALLY MEAN THOSE FIERCE WORDS.
YOU CAN KEEP YOUR FROGS. AND ANYWAY, WHO NEEDS BORDERS?
THERE'S PLENTY OF PREY IN THE FOREST.

YOU DON'T UNDERSTAND. THERE ARE FOUR CLANS. WE HAVE TO FIGHT TO SURVIVE.
MY ENEMIES WOULD DO ANYTHING TO TAKE MY TERRITORY AWAY FROM ME.
REALLY?
WHAT DID YOU DO, TO MAKE SO MANY ENEMIES?
YOU DON'T WANT TO KNOW.
WELL, GOOD LUCK WITH YOUR HUNTING.
LISTEN...IF YOU MEET ONE OF MY BORDER PATROLS, BE CAREFUL. ASK FOR TIGERSTAR IF THEY GIVE YOU ANY TROUBLE.
TIGERSTAR? OKAY.
AND WHAT'S YOUR NAME?
SASHA.


TIGERSTAR.
THE WHOLE NIGHT, AND ALL THE NEXT DAY, HE KEEPS POPPING INTO MY THOUGHTS.
THE WAY HE LOOKS...SO BIG, AND MUSCULAR, WITH THOSE FEROCIOUS CLAWS.
HIS SCENT. I THINK I'D KNOW IT ANYWHERE NOW.
AND HIS VOICE. SO CONFIDENT AND INTELLIGENT AND--
RRH?

OH!
I THINK THIS SLIPPED THROUGH YOUR PAWS.
I TRY REALLY HARD NOT TO LET IT SHOW, BUT...
...I THINK THIS IS THE CLOSEST I'VE EVER COME TO DYING OF EMBARRASSMENT.

YOUR TECHNIQUE IS ALL OVER THE PLACE.
WELL, I, AH... I GUESS I SHOULD PAY MORE ATTENTION WHEN I'M HUNTING, HUH?
TOO NOISY. TOO SLOW. TOO SCRAPPY.
SOME PROPER TRAINING WOULD DO YOU A WORLD OF GOOD.
OH? AND WHO'S GOING TO TRAIN ME?
YOU?
...MAYBE.

WHERE DO YOU LIVE?
PINE'S WORDS COME BACK TO ME, ABOUT CLAN CATS NOT LIKING KITTYPETS. I'D BETTER BE CAREFUL.
I HAVE A DEN, BESIDE THE NARROW TWOLEG PATH.
I'M PROBABLY NOT STAYING LONG.
I UNDERSTAND.
...MAY I SEE YOU AGAIN?

AND THAT'S WHERE IT BEGAN. WE MET AGAIN THE NEXT NIGHT...

...AND THE NEXT...

...AND THE NEXT.
NIGHT AFTER NIGHT, JUST THE TWO OF US. TIGERSTAR IS SO POLITE, AND STRONG, AND...

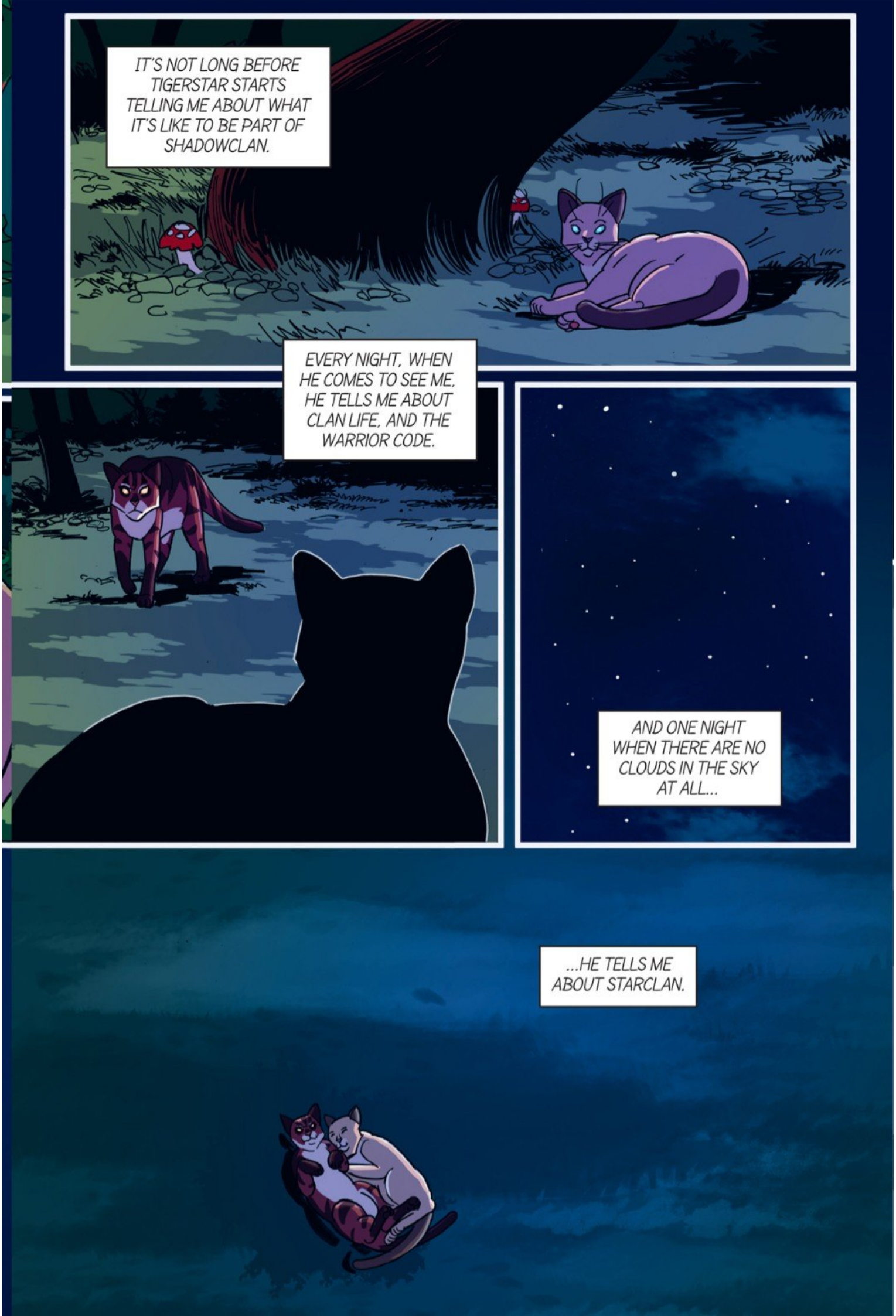
...HE MAKES ME FEEL SO SAFE. I LOVE THAT.
DO I--AM I--AM I FALLING IN LOVE WITH HIM? IS THAT WHAT THIS FEELING IS, IN MY HEART?

I'VE NEVER MET ANYONE LIKE TIGERSTAR BEFORE. HE'S SO GOOD TO ME, AND TREATS ME SO WELL.

PREY'S BEEN GETTING A LITTLE HARDER TO FIND, BUT EVEN WHEN I'M PREPARED TO GO TO SLEEP WITH AN EMPTY STOMACH...

...TIGERSTAR PROVIDES FOR ME.

THANK YOU.
ANYTIME, SASHA.


IT'S NOT LONG BEFORE TIGERSTAR STARTS TELLING ME ABOUT WHAT IT'S LIKE TO BE PART OF SHADOWCLAN.
EVERY NIGHT, WHEN HE COMES TO SEE ME, HE TELLS ME ABOUT CLAN LIFE, AND THE WARRIOR CODE.
AND ONE NIGHT WHEN THERE ARE NO CLOUDS IN THE SKY AT ALL...
...HE TELLS ME ABOUT STARCLAN.

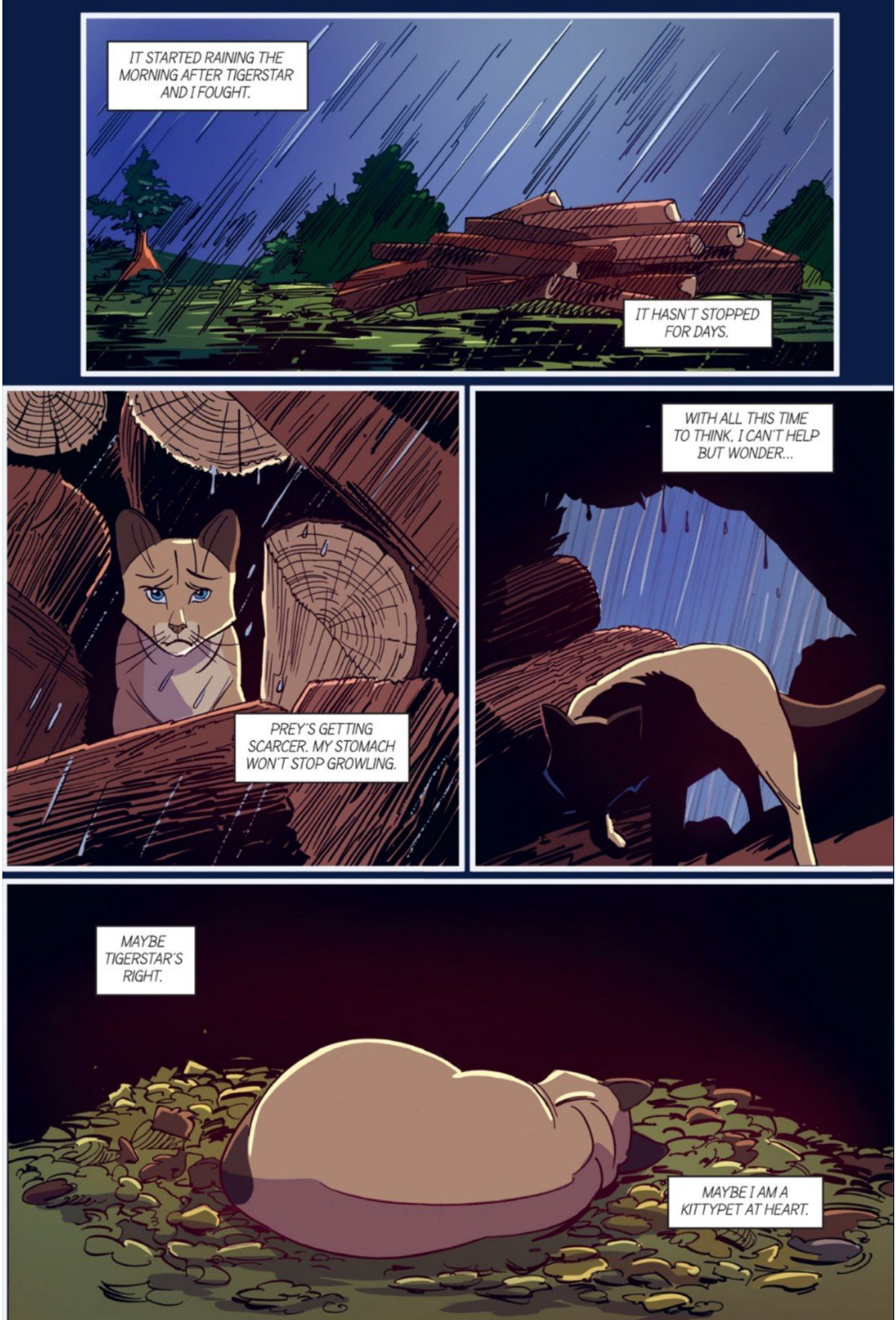
THEN ONE NIGHT, WHEN WE'RE WALKING BACK TO THE CROOKED TREE, A FOX COMES OUT OF NOWHERE.
I'M READY TO RUN FOR MY LIFE.
BUT TIGERSTAR GROWLS AND UNSHEATHES HIS CLAWS, AND JUST CHARGES STRAIGHT AT THE FOX!
I'M NOT ASHAMED TO SAY IT. NOT ONLY DID HE SAVE MY LIFE...
...BUT I SWEAR, HE'S THE BRAVEST CAT I'VE EVER SEEN.
HE EVEN GIVES IT A WARNING SCRATCH FOR GOOD MEASURE!

I NEVER THOUGHT IT COULD HAPPEN, BUT I'M STARTING TO THINK I COULD BE HAPPY HERE. HERE...WITH TIGERSTAR.
WHERE IS HE, ANYWAY?
I HOPE HE'S OKAY. IF ANYTHING HAPPENED TO HIM...WELL, I DON'T WANT TO THINK ABOUT IT.
GUESS I'LL JUST GET SOMETHING TO EAT AND HEAD HOME.
EVENING, SASHA.
THERE YOU ARE!
WHAT HAPPENED? WHERE WERE YOU?
I WAS WORRIED SICK!

NICE PLACE. I SHOULD'VE COME HERE EARLIER.
QUIET. PEACEFUL.
SO TELL ME...
...WHEN WILL YOU BE GOING BACK TO YOUR TWOLEGS?
IT ALL COMES CRASHING DOWN IN A SINGLE HEARTBEAT. HE KNOWS!
WELL...WELL, WHAT GIVES YOU THE RIGHT TO GO SNOOPING IN MY DEN, ANYWAY? HUH?

YOU'RE A KITTYPET.
I THOUGHT I WAS A ROGUE!
BURY THIS... THIS THING. RIGHT NOW.
TREAT IT LIKE DIRT. LIKE THE FILTH IT IS.
I SHOULD'VE TOLD HIM THE TRUTH FROM THE START.
BUT HOW COULD I BURY THAT COLLAR, WHEN KEN AND JEAN GAVE IT TO ME?
IT'S NOT FILTH. THAT COLLAR IS TOO IMPORTANT TO ME TO JUST GET RID OF IT.
AND WHAT'S SO WRONG WITH BEING A KITTYPET, ANYWAY?

A KITTYPET EATS MUSH INSTEAD OF FRESH-KILL, AND SLEEPS IN TWOLEG NESTS BECAUSE THEY'RE TOO SCARED TO LIVE UNDER THE TREES AND THE OPEN SKY.
A KITTYPET DOESN'T KNOW ABOUT THE WARRIOR CODE, OR WHAT IT MEANS TO FIGHT FOR SURVIVAL, TO PROTECT A CLAN LIKE A MOTHER PROTECTING HER KITS.
A KITTYPET CAN'T FEED HERSELF.
HEY!
WELL, IF I'M SO OFFENSIVE, WHY ARE YOU EVEN STILL STANDING HERE, TALKING TO ME?
YOU'RE RIGHT.
I CAN'T STAY HERE.
NO CAT WOULD BELIEVE IT IF THEY THOUGHT I WAS TALKING TO A KITTYPET.

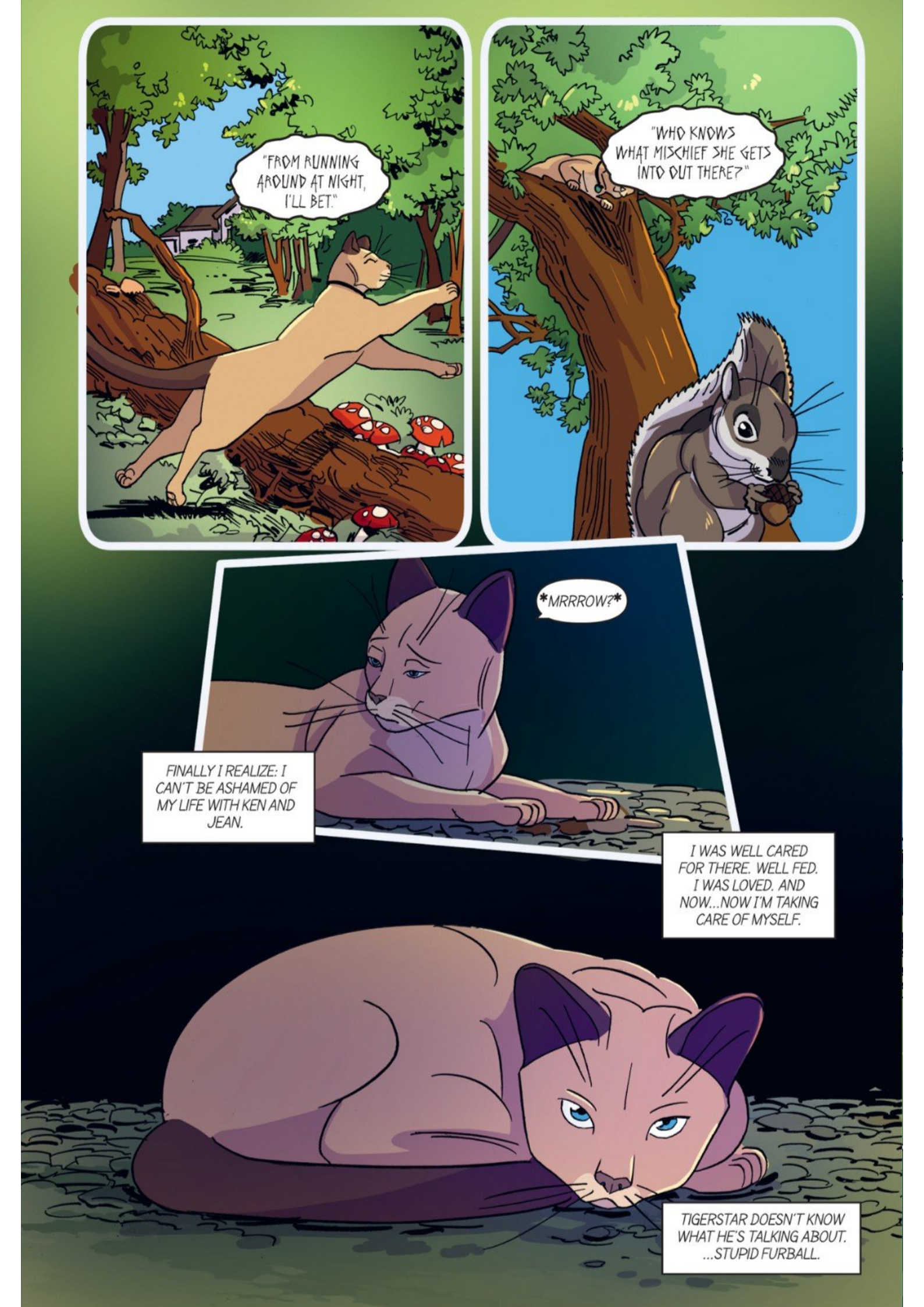

IT STARTED RAINING THE MORNING AFTER TIGERSTAR AND I FOUGHT.
IT HASN'T STOPPED FOR DAYS.
PREY'S GETTING SCARCER. MY STOMACH WON'T STOP GROWLING.
WITH ALL THIS TIME TO THINK, I CAN'T HELP BUT WONDER...
MAYBE TIGERSTAR'S RIGHT.
MAYBE I AM A KITTYPET AT HEART.

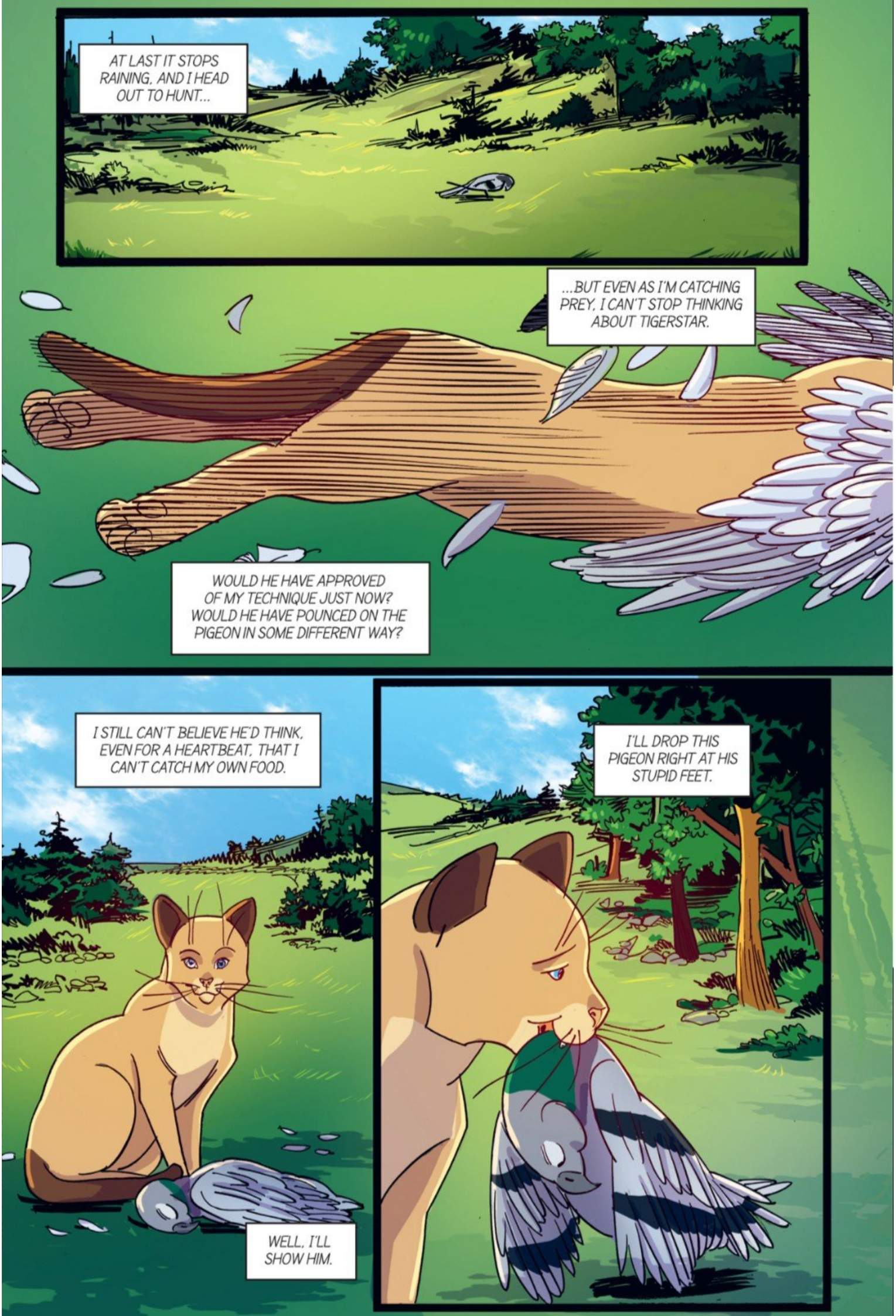
WHO'S A GOOD KITTY KITTUMS? WHO IS IT? IS SASHA THE GOOD KITTY KITTUMS?

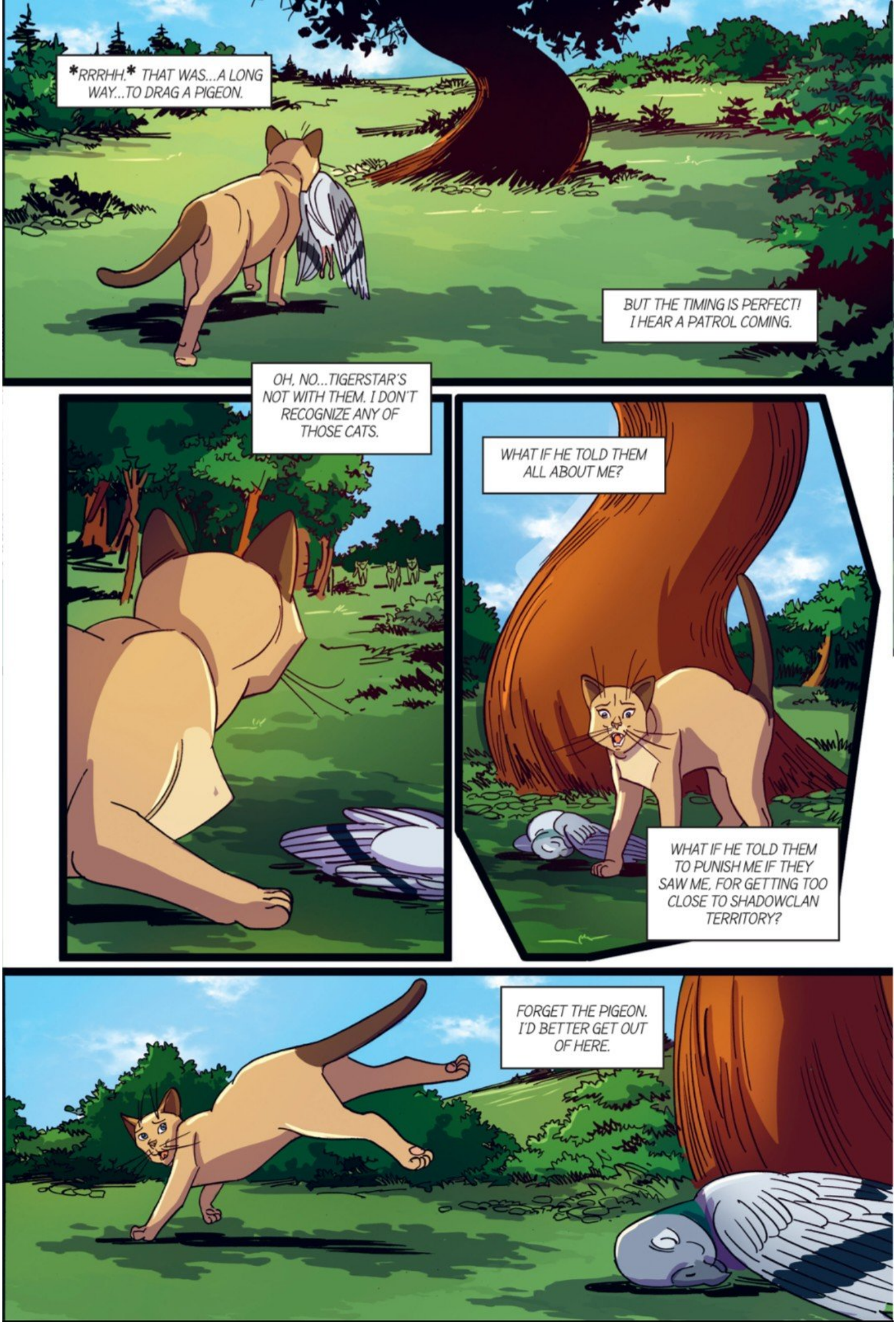
WHAT A GOOD LITTLE GIRL!
I THINK I'LL GET HER SOME MORE TOYS TOMORROW.

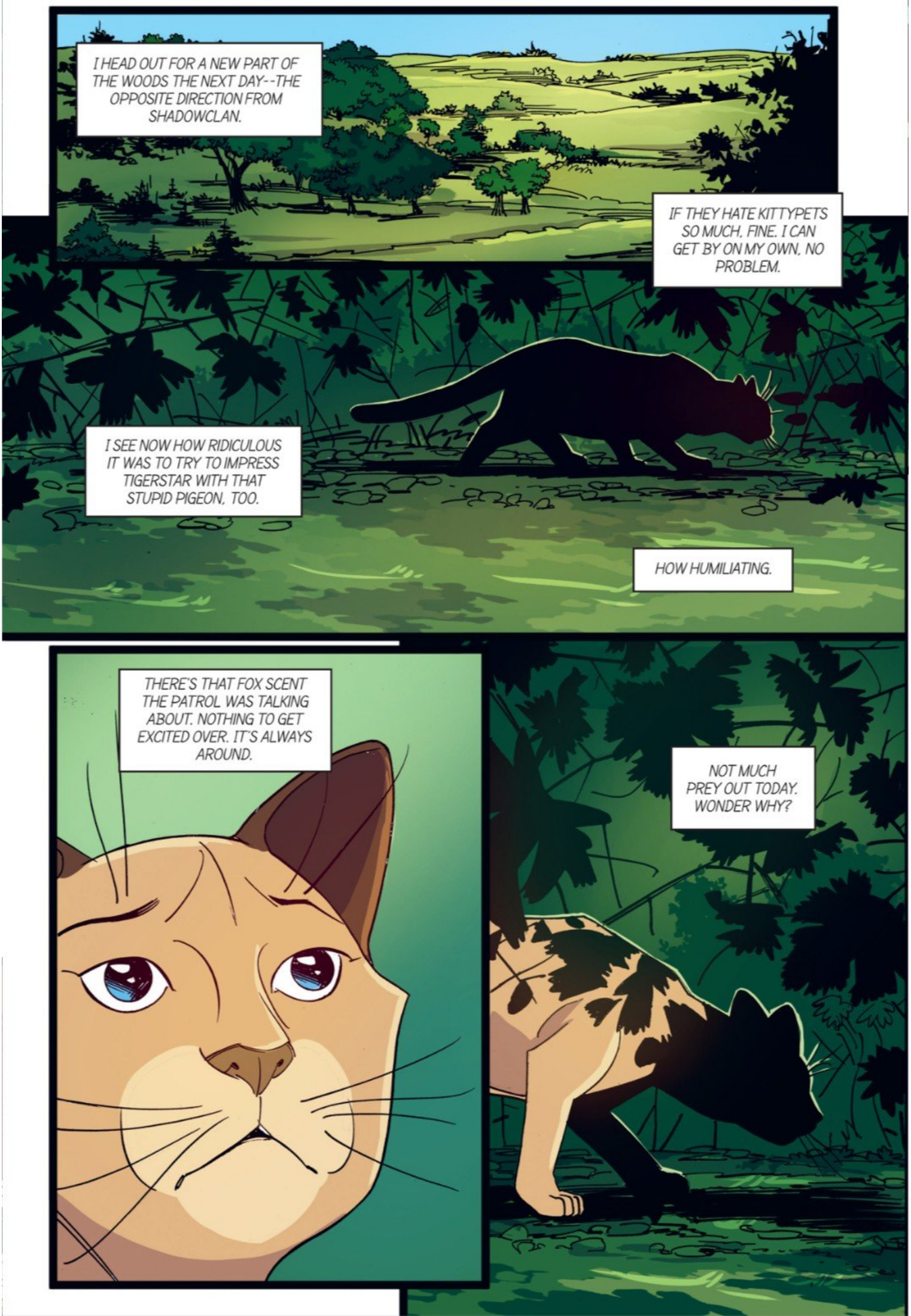
EVERYBODY SAY "CHEESE!"

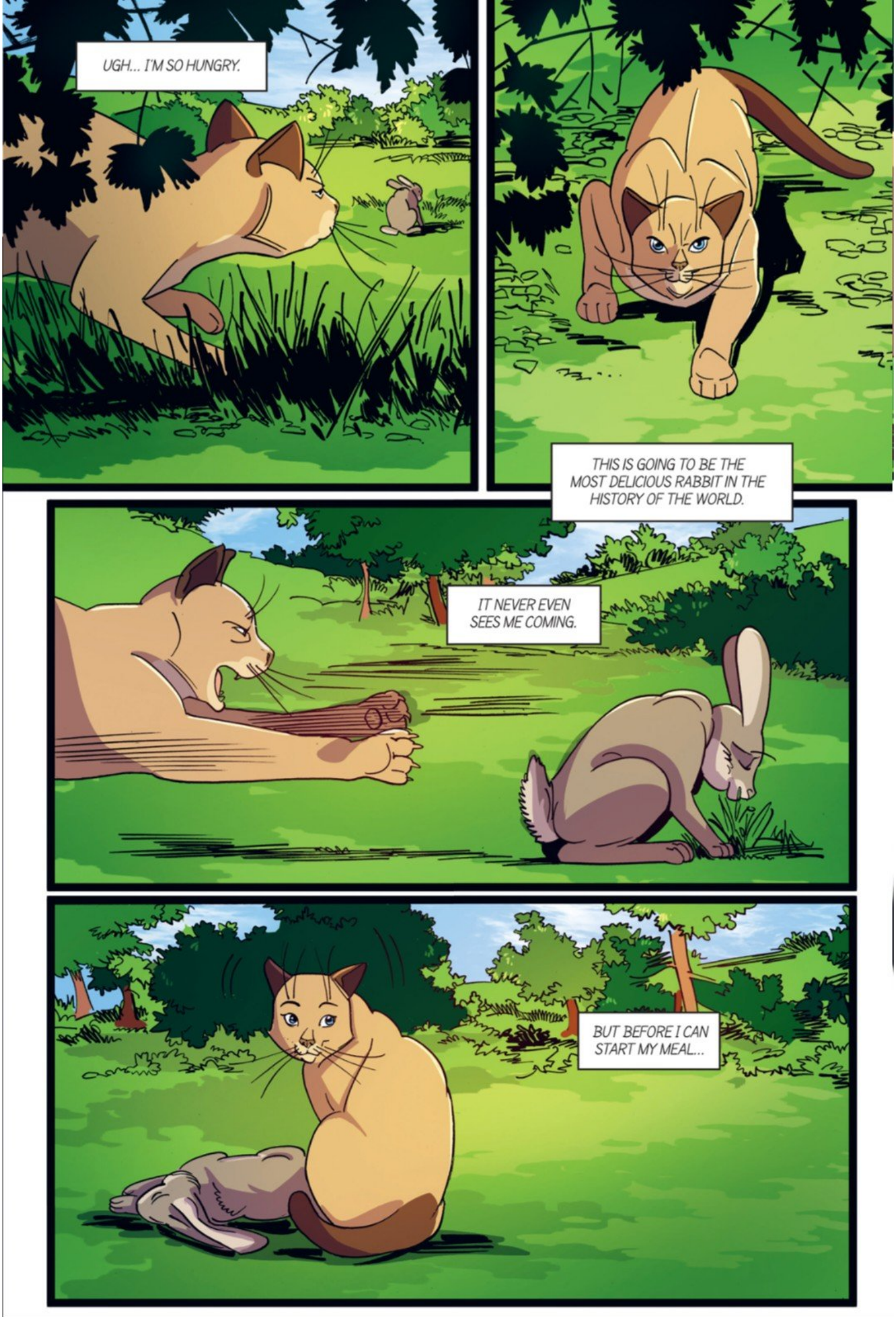
SHE'S GOT A GOOD APPETITE.


"FROM RUNNING AROUND AT NIGHT, I'LL BET."
"WHO KNOWS WHAT MISCHIEF SHE GETS INTO OUT THERE?"
MRRROW?
FINALLY I REALIZE: I CAN'T BE ASHAMED OF MY LIFE WITH KEN AND JEAN.
I WAS WELL CARED FOR THERE. WELL FED. I WAS LOVED. AND NOW...NOW I'M TAKING CARE OF MYSELF.
TIGERSTAR DOESN'T KNOW WHAT HE'S TALKING ABOUT. ...STUPID FURBALL.

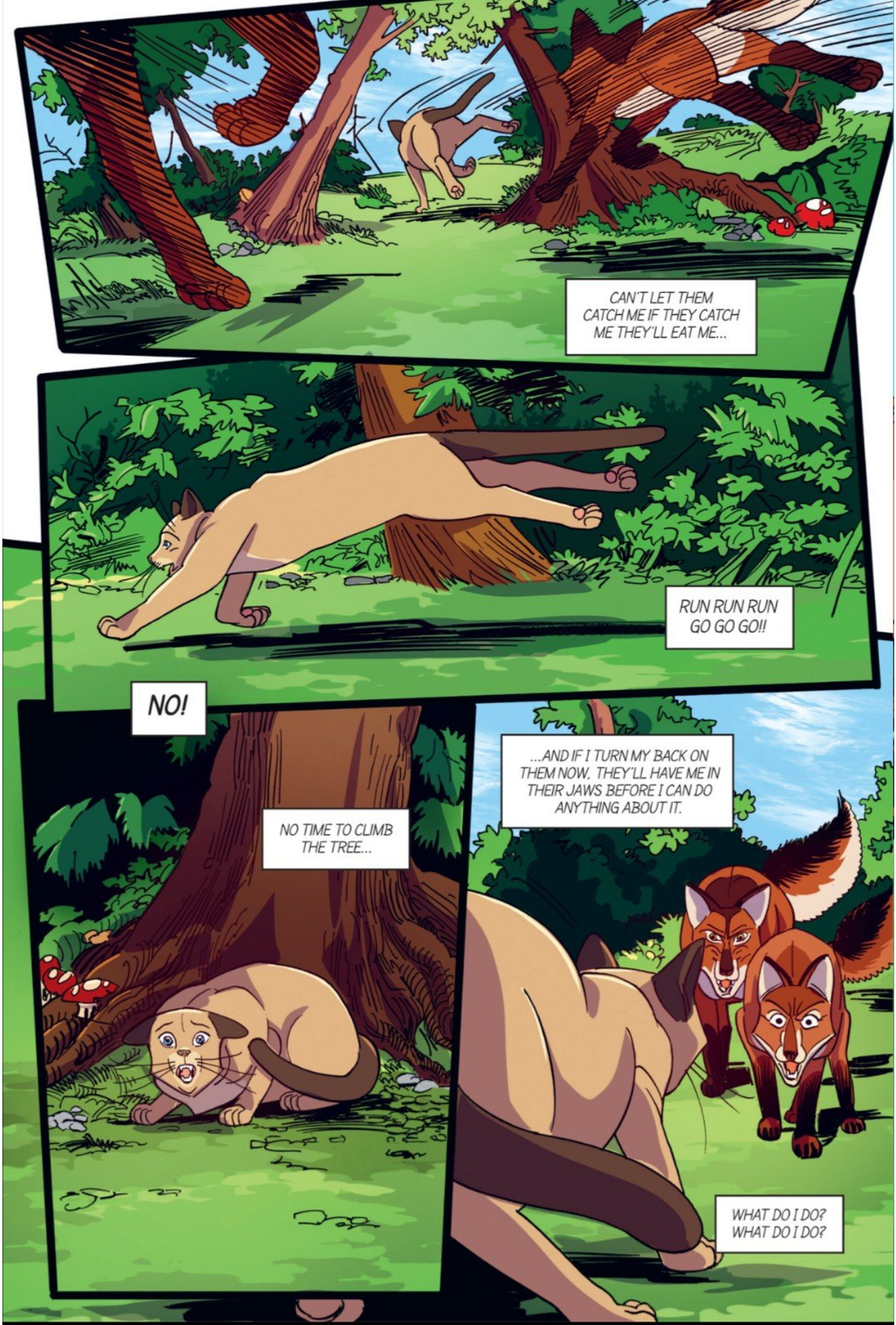

AT LAST IT STOPS RAINING, AND I HEAD OUT TO HUNT...
...BUT EVEN AS I'M CATCHING PREY, I CAN'T STOP THINKING ABOUT TIGERSTAR.
WOULD HE HAVE APPROVED OF MY TECHNIQUE JUST NOW? WOULD HE HAVE POUNCED ON THE PIGEON IN SOME DIFFERENT WAY?
I STILL CAN'T BELIEVE HE'D THINK, EVEN FOR A HEARTBEAT, THAT I CAN'T CATCH MY OWN FOOD.
I'LL DROP THIS PIGEON RIGHT AT HIS STUPID FEET.
WELL, I'LL SHOW HIM.


RRRHH. THAT WAS...A LONG WAY...TO DRAG A PIGEON.
BUT THE TIMING IS PERFECT! I HEAR A PATROL COMING.
OH, NO...TIGERSTAR'S NOT WITH THEM. I DON'T RECOGNIZE ANY OF THOSE CATS.
WHAT IF HE TOLD THEM ALL ABOUT ME?
WHAT IF HE TOLD THEM TO PUNISH ME IF THEY SAW ME, FOR GETTING TOO CLOSE TO SHADOWCLAN TERRITORY?
FORGET THE PIGEON. I'D BETTER GET OUT OF HERE.


I HEAD OUT FOR A NEW PART OF THE WOODS THE NEXT DAY--THE OPPOSITE DIRECTION FROM SHADOWCLAN.
IF THEY HATE KITTYPETS SO MUCH, FINE. I CAN GET BY ON MY OWN, NO PROBLEM.
I SEE NOW HOW RIDICULOUS IT WAS TO TRY TO IMPRESS TIGERSTAR WITH THAT STUPID PIGEON, TOO.
HOW HUMILIATING.
THERE'S THAT FOX SCENT THE PATROL WAS TALKING ABOUT. NOTHING TO GET EXCITED OVER. IT'S ALWAYS AROUND.
NOT MUCH PREY OUT TODAY. WONDER WHY?


UGH... I'M SO HUNGRY.
THIS IS GOING TO BE THE MOST DELICIOUS RABBIT IN THE HISTORY OF THE WORLD.
IT NEVER EVEN SEES ME COMING.
BUT BEFORE I CAN START MY MEAL...

...IT FEELS LIKE ALL MY BLOOD JUST FREEZES SOLID INSIDE ME.
THIS IS MY KILL! MINE! YOU...
...YOU JUST GO FIND YOUR OWN! GO ON, NOW! GO!
RUN RUN RUN GOTTA RUN GOTTA RUN FAST!


CAN'T LET THEM CATCH ME IF THEY CATCH ME THEY'LL EAT ME...
RUN RUN RUN GO GO GO!!
NO!
NO TIME TO CLIMB THE TREE...
...AND IF I TURN MY BACK ON THEM NOW, THEY'LL HAVE ME IN THEIR JAWS BEFORE I CAN DO ANYTHING ABOUT IT.
WHAT DO I DO? WHAT DO I DO?

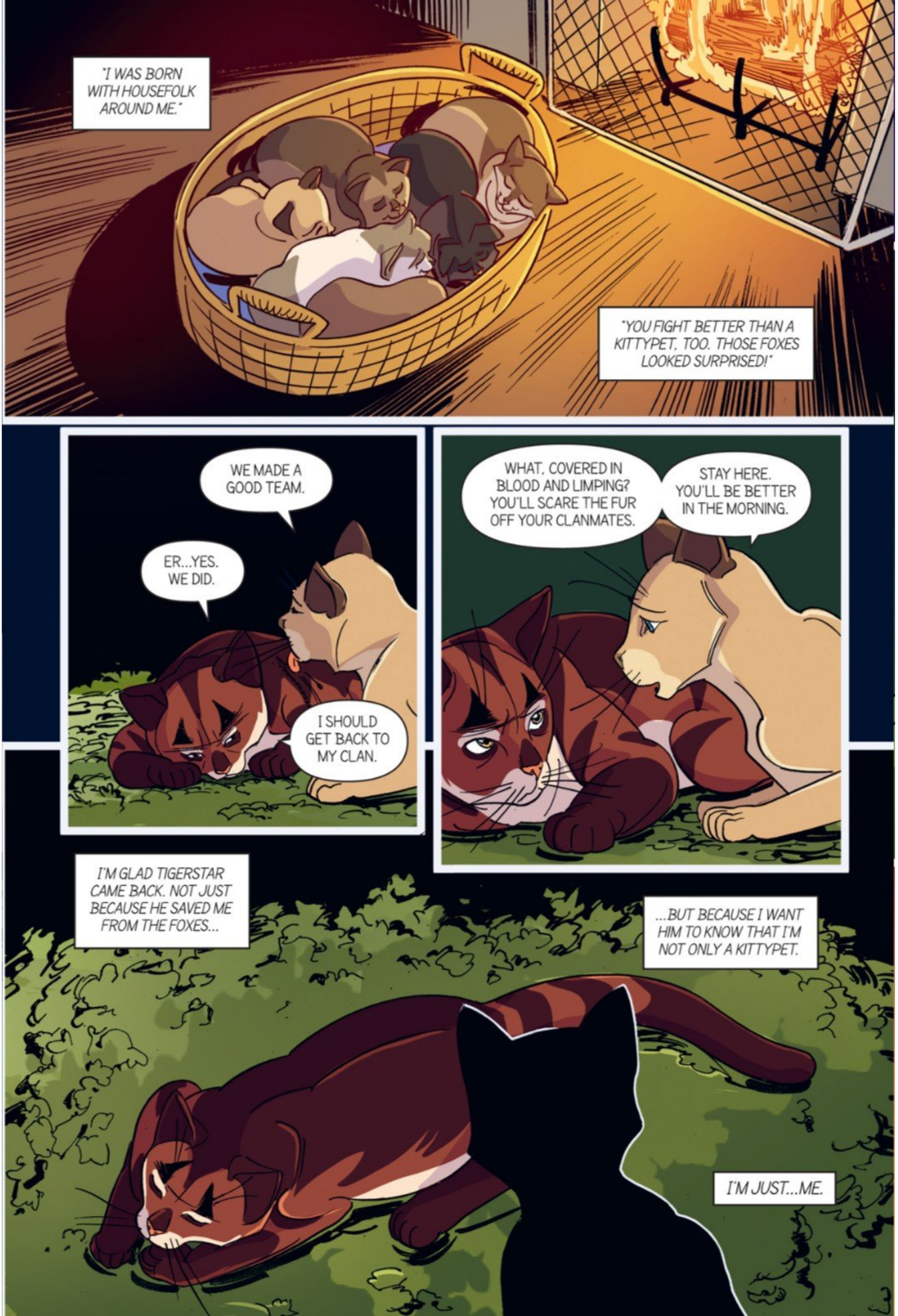
WHAMM
RRHHRRRHHH!
GET OUT OF HERE!
NOW.
TIGERSTAR! HOW--?

I DON'T HAVE TIME FOR ANY OTHER THOUGHTS. THE FOXES ARE ON HIM INSTANTLY.
IT'S TWO AGAINST ONE...AND THAT OLDER FOX IS SO BIG! I HAVE TO HELP HIM!
BUT I'VE NEVER FOUGHT BEFORE! HOW DO I DO THIS?
GRRHHH
GRRHHH

RRAAOWRRH!
SASHA, WHAT ARE YOU DOING?
SHUT UP AND FIGHT!
I DON'T KNOW WHAT IT IS... SEEING TIGERSTAR IN DANGER-- OR MAYBE KNOWING HE'D SAVED MY LIFE AGAIN.
BUT SOMETHING JUST TAKES OVER.

AND BEFORE I KNOW IT...
...THE FIGHT'S DONE.
TIGERSTAR! YOU'RE BLEEDING--ARE YOU HURT BAD?
I JUST...NEED TO REST...
COME ON. LEAN ON ME.
I'LL GET YOU SOMEWHERE SAFE.

I TRY TO GET AS MUCH WATER IN THE MOSS AS I CAN.
I HOPE IT'S ENOUGH.
THANK YOU FOR SAVING MY LIFE.
WHY'D YOU COME BACK?
TO THANK YOU FOR THE PIGEON.
IT HAD YOUR SCENT ALL OVER IT.
WHY'D YOU LEAVE IT AT THE BORDER?
I WANTED TO SHOW YOU THAT KITTYPETS CAN HUNT.
YOU'RE NOT LIKE ANY KITTYPET I'VE EVER MET.
YOU SURE YOUR MOTHER WASN'T CLAN? OR AT LEAST A ROGUE?
I DON'T THINK SO.


"I WAS BORN WITH HOUSEFOLK AROUND ME."
"YOU FIGHT BETTER THAN A KITTYPET, TOO. THOSE FOXES LOOKED SURPRISED!"
WE MADE A GOOD TEAM.
ER...YES. WE DID.
I SHOULD GET BACK TO MY CLAN.
WHAT, COVERED IN BLOOD AND LIMPING? YOU'LL SCARE THE FUR OFF YOUR CLANMATES.
STAY HERE. YOU'LL BE BETTER IN THE MORNING.
I'M GLAD TIGERSTAR CAME BACK. NOT JUST BECAUSE HE SAVED ME FROM THE FOXES...
...BUT BECAUSE I WANT HIM TO KNOW THAT I'M NOT ONLY A KITTYPET.
I'M JUST...ME.

I HAVE TO GET BACK TO THE CAMP NOW.
THANK YOU AGAIN FOR HELPING ME.
I'LL BE PATROLLING TONIGHT.
CAN I SEE YOU AGAIN?
WHAT, EVEN THOUGH I'M A KITTYPET?
YOU'RE NOT. NOT REALLY. YOU'RE A... ROGUE.
IF YOU EVER GET CAUGHT BY A CLAN CAT, YOU MUST TELL THEM THAT. PROMISE?
WHY DO YOU HAVE TO GIVE EVERY CAT A NAME? WHY CAN'T WE JUST ALL BE CATS?
BECAUSE IT DOESN'T WORK THAT WAY.
IF YOU WERE BORN IN THE FOREST, YOU'D UNDERSTAND.

I THINK ABOUT WHAT TIGERSTAR SAID ALL DAY. CLANS...ROGUES...KITTYPETS.
I DON'T SEE WHY WE CAN'T ALL JUST LIVE AND LET LIVE.
CONFUSED OR NOT, THOUGH, I HAVE MORE RESPECT FOR CLAN CATS NOW.
I CAN'T SEE SHNUKY EVER TAKING ON ONE FOX, NEVER MIND TWO.
TIGERSTAR...?
HERE.

YOU LOOK... WELL.
"WELL"?
A CAT COULD ALMOST TAKE THAT AS A COMPLIMENT.
COME ON. I WANT TO SHOW YOU SOMETHING.
OH? WHERE?
YOU'LL SEE.
WHAT IS THIS?
IT'S A FENCE, SILLY! THERE'S NO TELLING HOW MANY HOURS I'VE SPENT SITTING ON TOP OF IT, JUST WATCHING THE WORLD.
COME ON UP, IT'S AN EASY JUMP.

OKAY, SEE THAT? THAT'S THE HOUSE I GREW UP IN--WHERE I LIVED WITH MY HOUSEFOLK.
AND THAT'S THE FIRST TREE I CLIMBED, AND I CAUGHT MY FIRST BIRD AT THAT BIRDBATH, AND...
...HEY, ARE YOU-- YOU'RE NOT PAYING ATTENTION AT ALL!
CAN'T YOU AT LEAST PRETEND TO BE INTERESTED? THIS PLACE IS IMPORTANT TO ME!
IT SHOULDN'T BE. NOT ANYMORE.
NOT IF YOU WANT TO LIVE IN THE FOREST.
AND IF YOU DO...YOU CAN'T HAVE ANYTHING TO DO WITH TWOLEGS.

WELL, SO MUCH FOR THAT IDEA. WE HEAD BACK TO THE WOODS, AND I'M FEELING PRETTY GLUM...
...UNTIL I SPOT AN OLD FRIEND.
HI, SHNUKY.
WHA--SASHA!
OH, SASHA, IT'S SO GOOD TO SEE YOU, I'VE BEEN SO WORRIED ABOUT YOU.
HOW HAVE YOU--
YEEK!
HA! TYPICAL.
I'LL BE UP HERE.
I HAVE NO INTEREST IN KITTYPET TALK.

SASHA, ARE YOU CRAZY? WHAT ARE YOU DOING WITH HIM?
THERE'S NO NEED TO BE SCARED. HIS NAME IS TIGERSTAR. HE SAVED MY LIFE.
OH, SASHA... YOU LOVE HIM, DON'T YOU? YOU LOVE THAT WILD CAT! I CAN TELL!
IT'S--I'M...I'M LONELY WITHOUT MY HOUSEFOLK.
BUT CATS LIKE US AND FOREST CATS DON'T MIX! EVERYBODY KNOWS THAT!
ENOUGH TALK. WE NEED TO GO.
SHNUKY DOESN'T UNDERSTAND. MY LIFE IS DIFFERENT NOW. I'M NOT A KITTYPET ANYMORE.
I DECIDE RIGHT THEN AND THERE: I'M GOING WITH TIGERSTAR TO THE FOREST, AND I'M NOT COMING BACK HERE.
EVER.

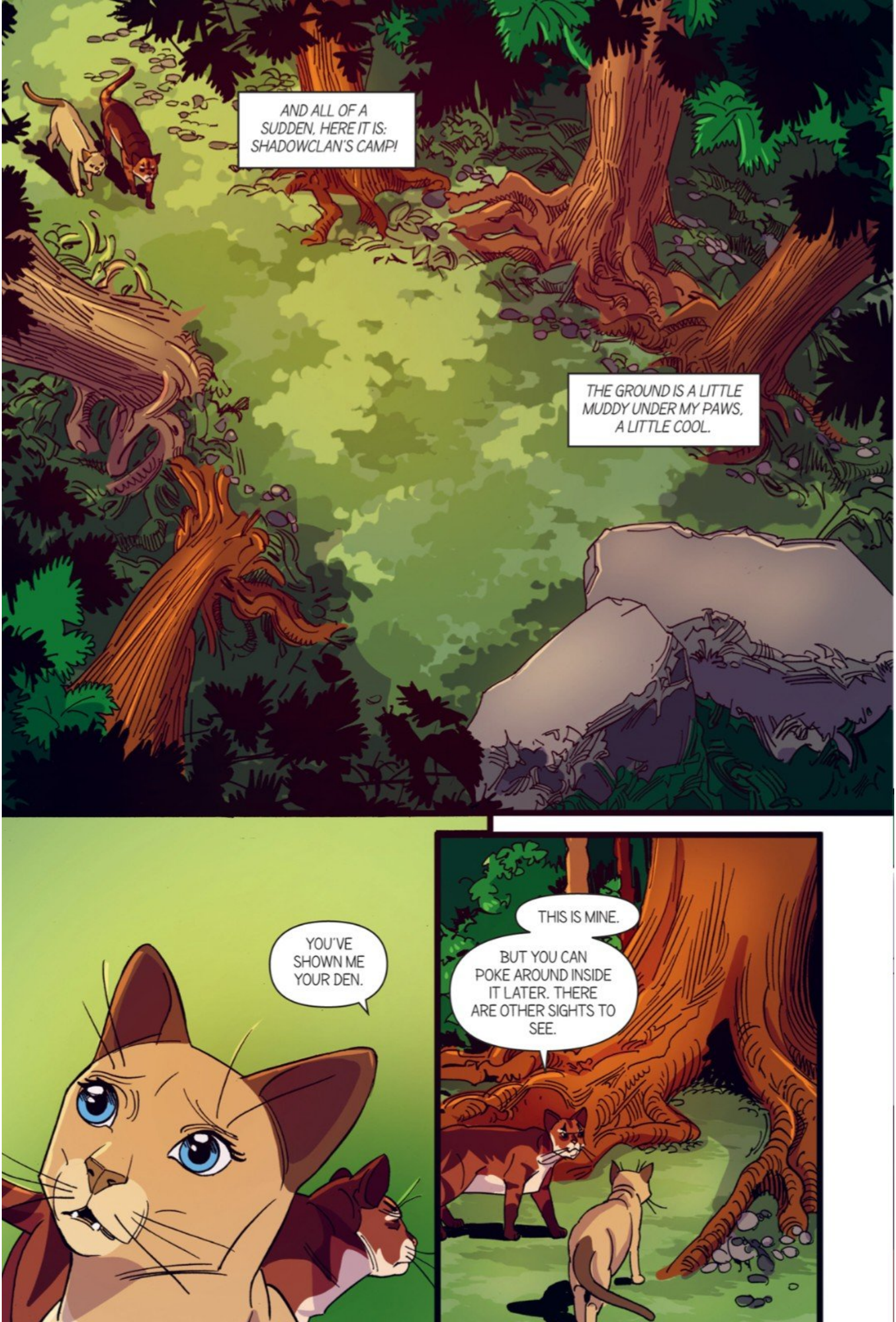
MY DEN SEEMED EMPTY LAST NIGHT WITHOUT TIGERSTAR IN IT... AND MY HEARTBEAT QUICKENS WHEN I SEE HIM.
I'M STARTING TO THINK SHNUKY WAS RIGHT.
MAYBE I DO LOVE HIM.
ALL RIGHT, NOW IT'S MY TURN. COME WITH ME.
WHERE ARE WE GOING?
I WANT YOU TO SEE THE SHADOWCLAN CAMP.
WON'T YOUR CLANMATES MIND?
I'M THEIR LEADER. THEY WON'T QUESTION ME.
OKAY. WHAT SHOULD I TELL THEM ABOUT MY, AH, MY LIFE AS A KITTYPET?
I DON'T WANT TO HEAR ABOUT THAT. NOT TONIGHT, NOT EVER.
YOU ARE NOT A KITTYPET!

I GET A TINGLE WHEN WE CROSS THE SHADOWCLAN BORDER.

SOON TIGERSTAR BEGINS POINTING OUT LANDMARKS. THE ROCKS WHERE A BRAVE WARRIOR FOUGHT HIS LAST BATTLE...

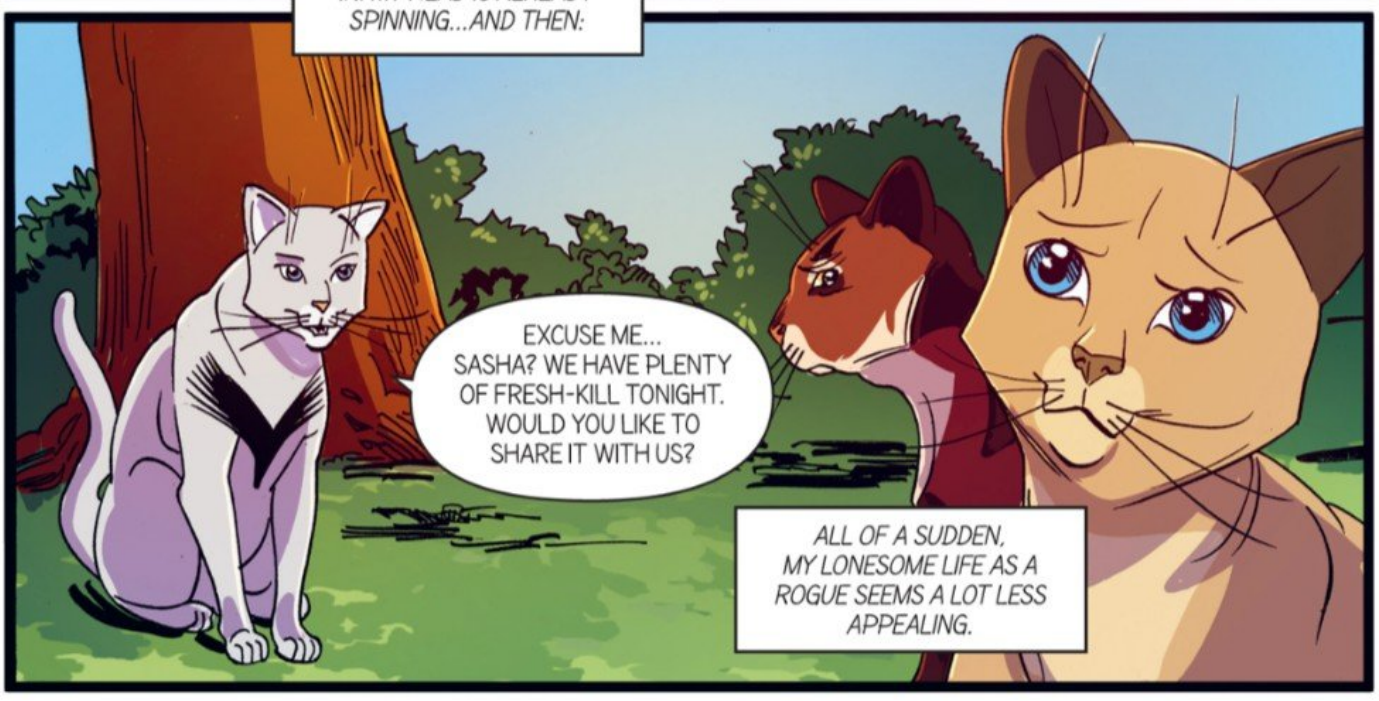
...THE TRAINING GROUND WHERE SHADOWCLAN WARRIORS LEARN TO HUNT AND TO FIGHT...

...AND FINALLY THE HIDDEN PATH THAT LEADS INTO THE CENTER OF THE CAMP.
I NEVER WOULD HAVE FOUND THIS ON MY OWN!


AND ALL OF A SUDDEN, HERE IT IS: SHADOWCLAN'S CAMP!
THE GROUND IS A LITTLE MUDDY UNDER MY PAWS, A LITTLE COOL.
YOU'VE SHOWN ME YOUR DEN.
THIS IS MINE.
BUT YOU CAN POKE AROUND INSIDE IT LATER. THERE ARE OTHER SIGHTS TO SEE.

THIS IS THE WARRIORS' DEN. IT'S A GREAT HONOR TO SLEEP HERE, AMONG THOSE CATS WHO DEFEND SHADOWCLAN WITH THEIR LIVES.
AND THIS IS ONE OF MY FINEST FIGHTERS: BOULDER.
PLEASED TO MEET YOU.
HI!
THIS IS THE DEN WHERE OUR MEDICINE CAT LIVES AND WORKS.
HIS NAME IS RUNNINGNOSE.
I'M CONCENTRATING HERE! UNLESS ONE OF YOU IS SICK, PLEASE COME BACK ANOTHER TIME!

THERE'S SO MUCH TO TAKE IN! MY HEAD IS ALREADY SPINNING...AND THEN:



AND THE BIGGEST SURPRISE IS YET TO COME.
SASHA. WE'RE PUTTING TOGETHER A HUNTING PARTY.
CARE TO JOIN US?

HOW CAN I SAY NO?
THE PARTY'S MADE UP OF BLACKFOOT (THE CLAN DEPUTY), RUSSETFUR, JAGGEDTOOTH, ROWANPAW...AND ME.
I'M NERVOUS BEYOND BELIEF AT FIRST...

...BUT THEN RUSSETFUR TELLS ME SOMETHING THAT REALLY HELPS.
DON'T WORRY, SASHA. BLACKFOOT, JAGGEDTOOTH, AND I ALL USED TO BE ROGUES. JUST LIKE YOU.
I LIKE RUSSETFUR A LOT ALREADY.

SHE AND I KEEP TALKING AS THE PARTY SETS OUT.
WE'RE VERY LUCKY TO HAVE TIGERSTAR AS OUR LEADER. HE'S SO STRONG...HE TRULY KNOWS HOW TO KEEP US ALL TOGETHER.
PLUS HE'S UNDER SO MUCH PRESSURE RIGHT NOW. NOT LONG AGO, SHADOWCLAN WAS ALMOST DESTROYED...
...BUT TIGERSTAR IS PUTTING IT BACK TOGETHER. LIFTING IT UP TO THE WAY IT USED TO BE.
THE OTHER CLANS ARE SO POWER-HUNGRY... BUT IF ANYBODY CAN KEEP THEM AT BAY, IT'S TIGERSTAR.
I CAN'T HELP BUT BE IMPRESSED. THEY REALLY LOVE HIM!

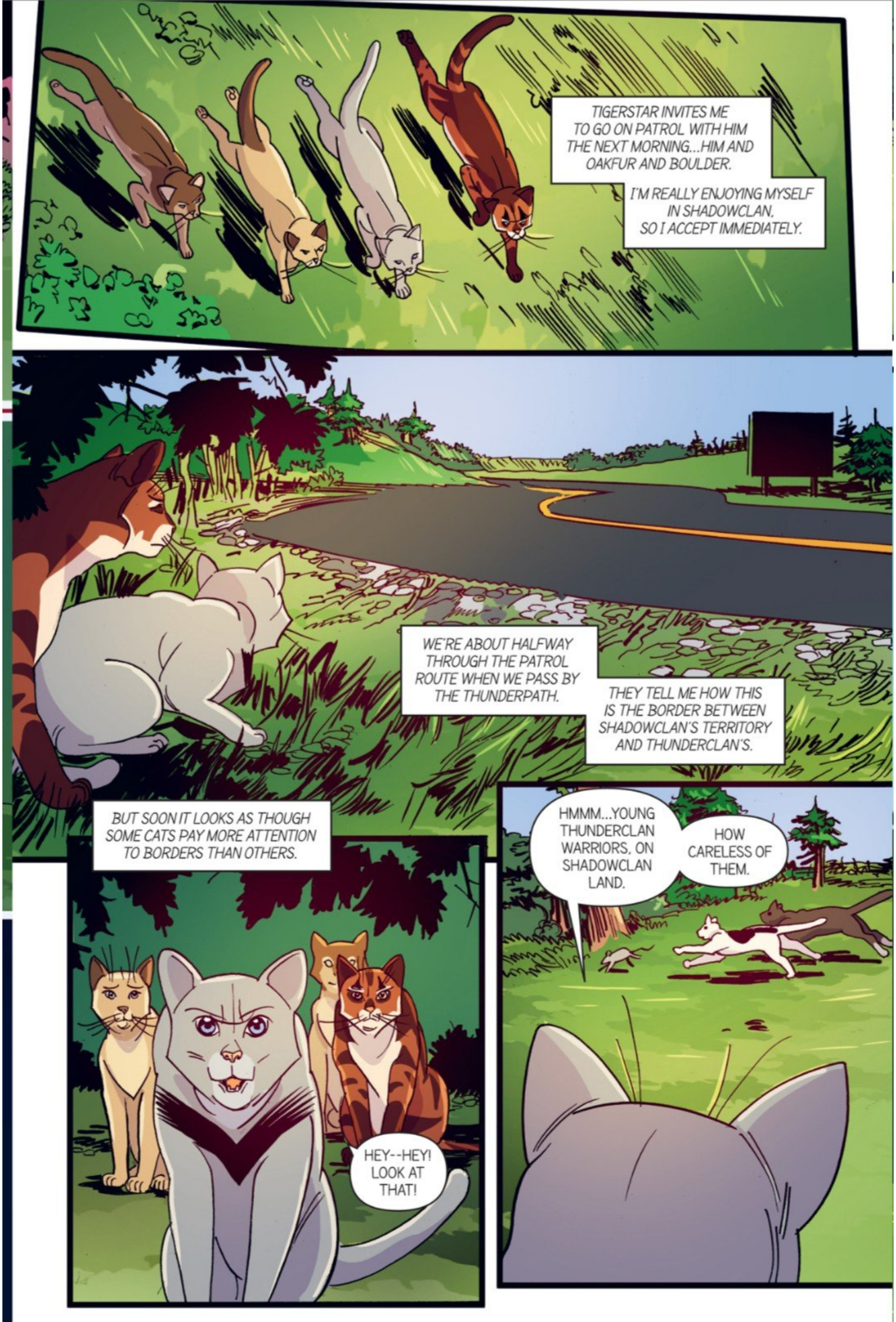
WE STOP CHATTING ONCE THINGS GET DOWN TO BUSINESS.
OH, NO YOU DON'T!
GOTCHA!
WOW! I'VE NEVER SEEN ANYBODY CLIMB A TREE SO FAST! HOW'D YOU GET SO GOOD?
WELL, I'VE HAD A LOT OF PRACTICE--
I BREAK OFF MY WORDS. I WAS ABOUT TO SAY, "CLIMBING FENCES." TIGERSTAR WOULD'VE BEEN SO MAD AT ME!

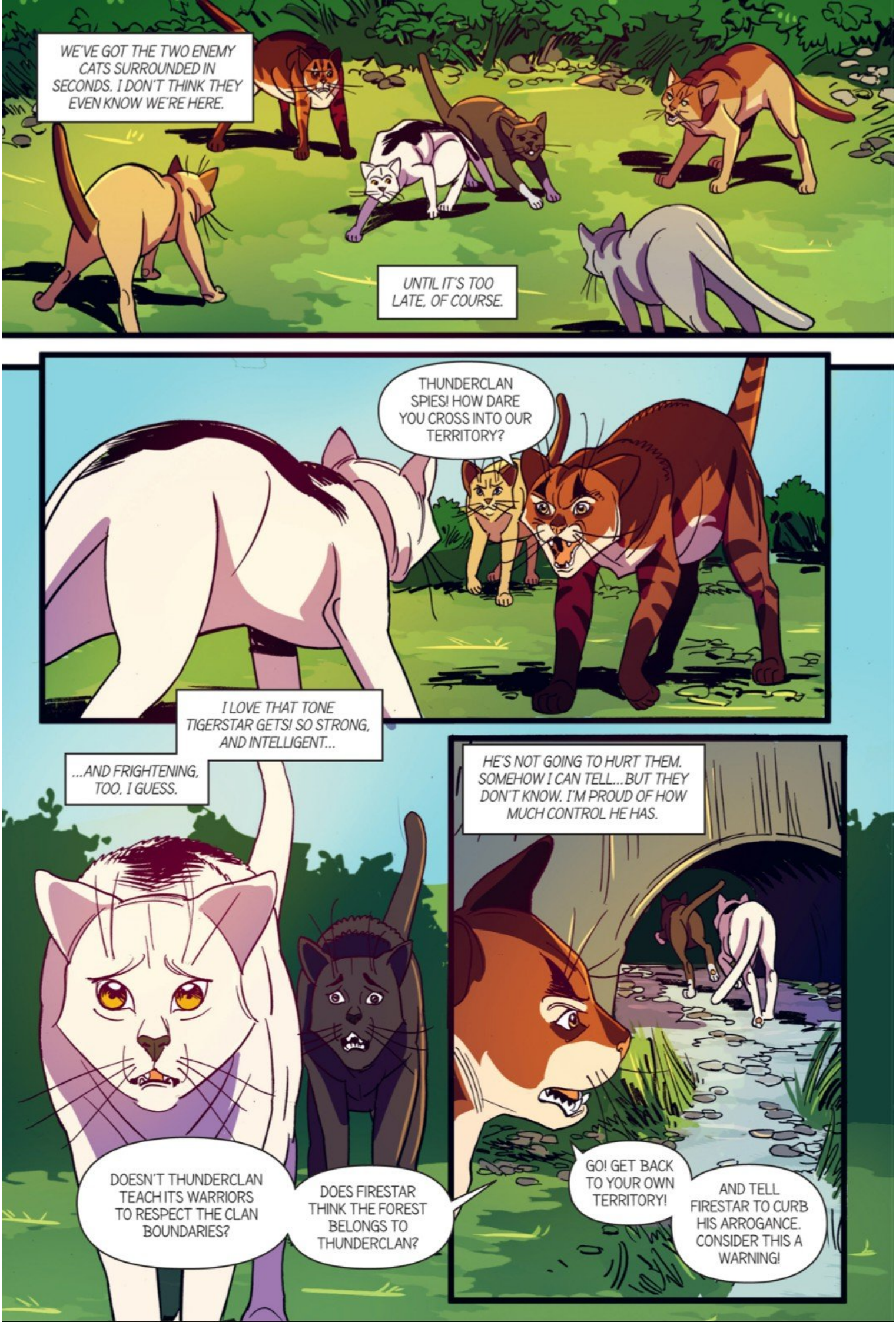
IT'S A FANTASTIC FEELING WHEN WE COME BACK TO CAMP, BRINGING FOOD FOR THE REST OF THE CLAN.

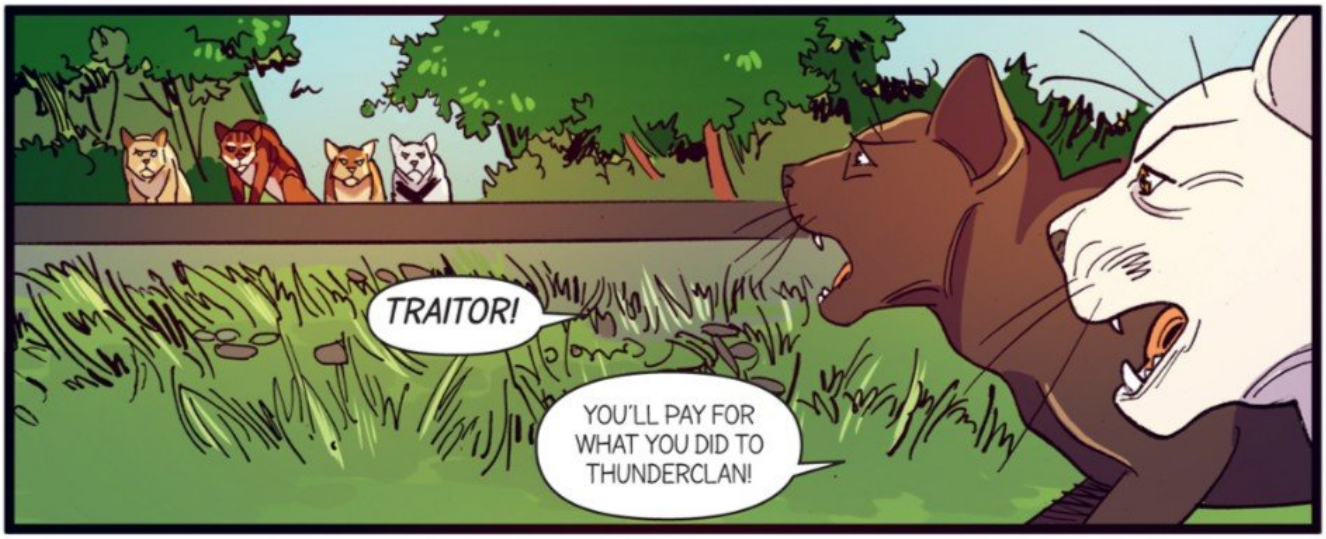
I CAN TELL TIGERSTAR'S PLEASED. THAT LOOK HE GIVES ME...IT JUST MAKES ME GET ALL MELTY.

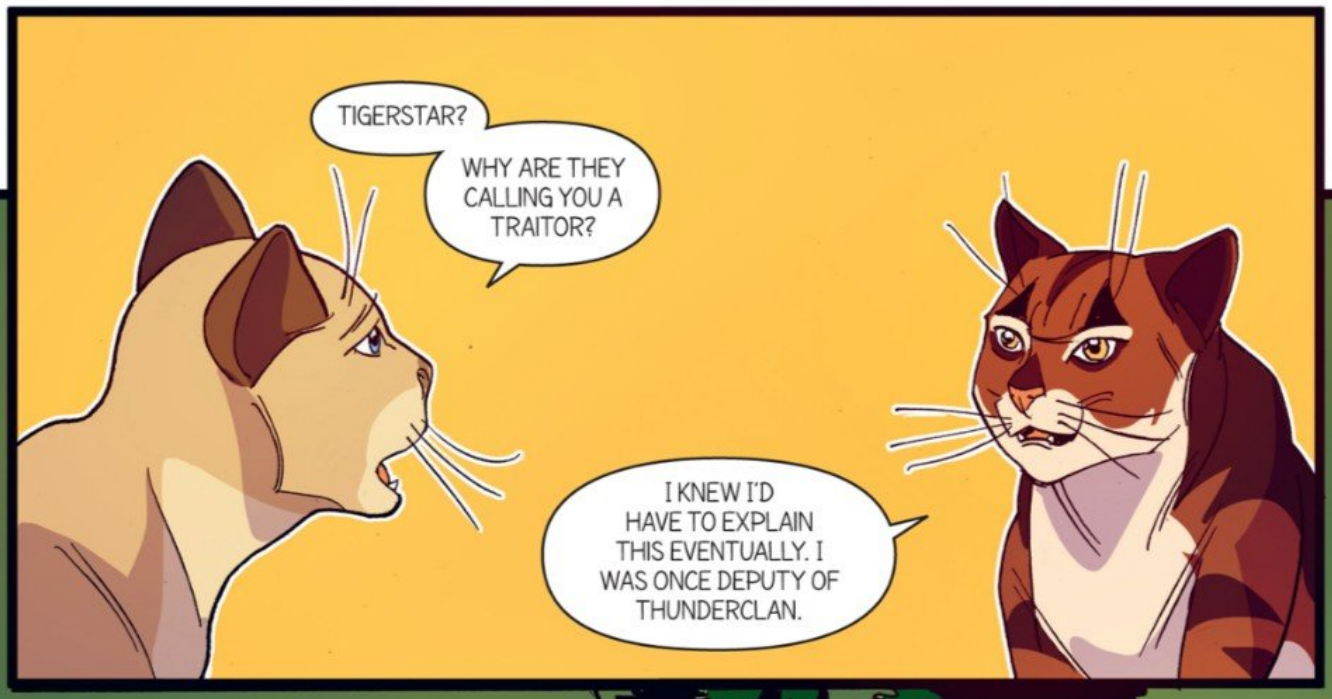
WELL DONE.
IT'S GETTING LATE, AND THE AIR IS COOL TONIGHT. WOULD YOU LIKE TO SLEEP IN THE WARRIORS' DEN?
HUH? ...ARE YOU SERIOUS?

TIGERSTAR'S RIGHT. THE NIGHTS ARE GETTING COLDER. LEAF-BARE ISN'T TOO FAR AWAY.
BUT TONIGHT...I'M AS WARM AS IF I'D BEEN SLEEPING IN A SUNBEAM.


TIGERSTAR INVITES ME TO GO ON PATROL WITH HIM THE NEXT MORNING...HIM AND OAKFUR AND BOULDER.
I'M REALLY ENJOYING MYSELF IN SHADOWCLAN, SO I ACCEPT IMMEDIATELY.
WE'RE ABOUT HALFWAY THROUGH THE PATROL ROUTE WHEN WE PASS BY THE THUNDERPATH.
THEY TELL ME HOW THIS IS THE BORDER BETWEEN SHADOWCLAN'S TERRITORY AND THUNDERCLAN'S.
BUT SOON IT LOOKS AS THOUGH SOME CATS PAY MORE ATTENTION TO BORDERS THAN OTHERS.
HEY--HEY! LOOK AT THAT!
HMMM...YOUNG THUNDERCLAN WARRIORS, ON SHADOWCLAN LAND.
HOW CARELESS OF THEM.


WE'VE GOT THE TWO ENEMY CATS SURROUNDED IN SECONDS. I DON'T THINK THEY EVEN KNOW WE'RE HERE.
UNTIL IT'S TOO LATE, OF COURSE.
THUNDERCLAN SPIES! HOW DARE YOU CROSS INTO OUR TERRITORY?
I LOVE THAT TONE TIGERSTAR GETS! SO STRONG, AND INTELLIGENT...
...AND FRIGHTENING, TOO, I GUESS.
HE'S NOT GOING TO HURT THEM. SOMEHOW I CAN TELL...BUT THEY DON'T KNOW. I'M PROUD OF HOW MUCH CONTROL HE HAS.
DOESN'T THUNDERCLAN TEACH ITS WARRIORS TO RESPECT THE CLAN BOUNDARIES?
DOES FIRESTAR THINK THE FOREST BELONGS TO THUNDERCLAN?
GO! GET BACK TO YOUR OWN TERRITORY!
AND TELL FIRESTAR TO CURB HIS ARROGANCE. CONSIDER THIS A WARNING!


TRAITOR!
YOU'LL PAY FOR WHAT YOU DID TO THUNDERCLAN!


TIGERSTAR?
WHY ARE THEY CALLING YOU A TRAITOR?
I KNEW I'D HAVE TO EXPLAIN THIS EVENTUALLY. I WAS ONCE DEPUTY OF THUNDERCLAN.

I WAS DRIVEN OUT BY THEIR FORMER LEADER, BLUESTAR, WHO WAS WEAK AND ENVIOUS OF MY STRENGTH.
NOW THEY'RE LED BY FIRESTAR, AND THEY'RE A MENACE TO THE FOREST. THEY PAY NO REGARD TO THE WARRIOR CODE.

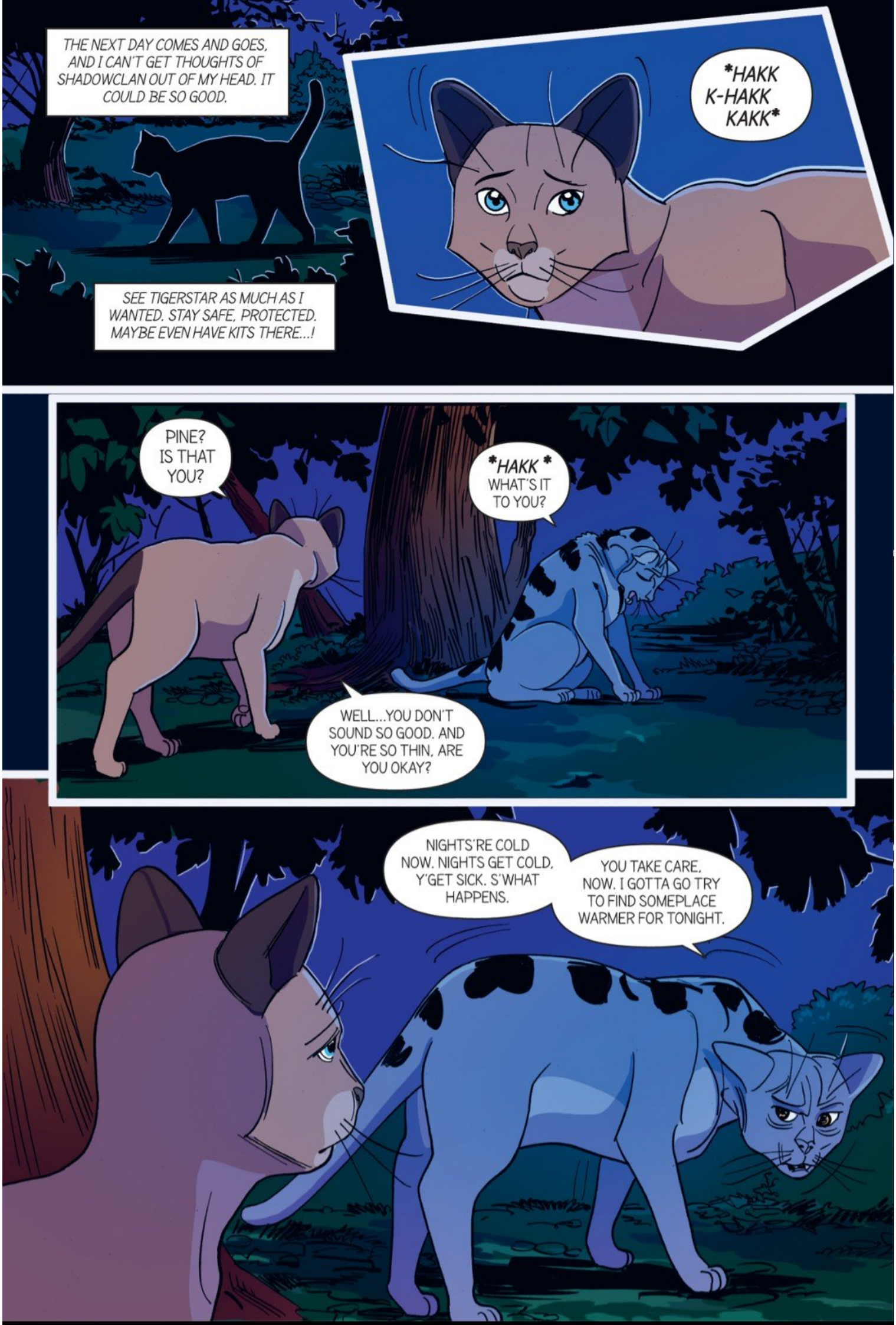
BETWEEN YOU AND ME, I'M WORRIED THAT FIRESTAR HAS AMBITIONS TO RULE THE ENTIRE FOREST.

PART OF ME DOESN'T WANT TO GO...BUT I KNOW I SHOULD GET BACK TO MY OWN DEN FOR A WHILE.
THANK YOU FOR A LOVELY TIME, TIGERSTAR.
SASHA...WILL YOU JOIN US? JOIN THE CLAN?

YOU'D FIT IN WELL. YOU CAN HUNT. YOU'RE A GOOD FIGHTER.

JOIN SHADOWCLAN...! THAT WOULD BE SO GREAT! BUT--BUT WHAT IF KEN CAME BACK?
CAN I THINK ABOUT IT?
I'LL COME TO YOUR DEN TOMORROW NIGHT. YOU CAN TELL ME THEN.

TOMORROW NIGHT...? WHY SO FAST?
OKAY...


THE NEXT DAY COMES AND GOES, AND I CAN'T GET THOUGHTS OF SHADOWCLAN OUT OF MY HEAD. IT COULD BE SO GOOD.
HAKK K-HAKK KAKK
SEE TIGERSTAR AS MUCH AS I WANTED. STAY SAFE, PROTECTED. MAYBE EVEN HAVE KITS THERE...!
PINE? IS THAT YOU?
*HAKK * WHAT'S IT TO YOU?
WELL...YOU DON'T SOUND SO GOOD. AND YOU'RE SO THIN, ARE YOU OKAY?
NIGHTS'RE COLD NOW. NIGHTS GET COLD, Y'GET SICK. S'WHAT HAPPENS.
YOU TAKE CARE, NOW. I GOTTA GO TRY TO FIND SOMEPLACE WARMER FOR TONIGHT.

OKAY. THAT DOES IT. IF THAT'S WHAT I'VE GOT TO LOOK FORWARD TO AS A ROGUE...THEN I'LL DO IT.
I'LL JOIN SHADOWCLAN!
TIGERSTAR'S GOING TO BE SO HAPPY!
OH--I CAN HEAR VOICES UP AHEAD. DON'T WANT TO DISTURB ANYBODY. AFTER ALL, I'M NOT A CLAN MEMBER YET.
WAIT...IS THAT TIGERSTAR'S VOICE?

I CAN'T QUITE MAKE OUT WHAT THEY'RE SAYING...BUT THEY SOUND SO SERIOUS. I HOPE NOTHING'S WRONG.
I'M TRYING TO DECIDE WHETHER OR NOT TO MAKE MY PRESENCE KNOWN--BUT SOMETHING STOPS ME.
THEN I HEAR IT AGAIN...
...THE WORD "BLOOD."

THERE'S NO MORE TIME TO DELAY. WAR IS UPON THE CLANS, AND EVERY WARRIOR AND QUEEN MUST BE PREPARED TO FIGHT!
SCOURGE OF BLOODCLAN HAS AGREED TO UNITE WITH US. THE NEXT STEP IS TO TAKE OVER RIVERCLAN.
LEOPARDSTAR IS TOO WEAK TO STOP ME. SHE KNOWS I AM THE STRONGEST CAT IN THE WHOLE FOREST--
--AND SOON I WILL RULE ALL THE CLANS.
WHAT ABOUT FIRESTAR?
HA HA HA... THUNDERCLAN WON'T BE A PROBLEM.
I HAVE A PLAN TO LURE A PACK OF DOGS INTO THEIR CAMP.
THEN WE'LL BE RID OF THAT FILTHY KITTYPET FIRESTAR AND HIS CLAN OF KITTYPETS AND HALFBREEDS ONCE AND FOR ALL.

AND THEN TIGERSTAR...
...SHALL RULE...
...EVERYTHING.

I CAN'T BELIEVE IT!
I CAN'T BELIEVE IT!
I'VE GOT TO GET AWAY FROM HERE!
WHAT WAS THAT?
FASTER FASTER
GO FASTER!

ONLY WHEN I'M SURE NO ONE'S FOLLOWING ME DO I LET MYSELF SLOW DOWN ENOUGH TO THINK.
TIGERSTAR LIED TO ME! HE'S THE ENEMY OF THE FOREST, NOT FIRESTAR!
AND IT'S NOT A CLAN HE WANTS ME TO JOIN, EITHER. IT'S AN ARMY. AN ARMY THAT'LL FIGHT AGAINST KITTYPETS.
CAN TIGERSTAR EVER LOVE ME? I USED TO BE A KITTYPET. WHAT IF HE LOVES ALL THIS POWER AND BLOODSHED MORE THAN ME?
...IS IT MY DESTINY TO BE ALONE?
SASHA.
DO YOU HAVE AN ANSWER FOR ME?

WILL YOU JOIN SHADOWCLAN?

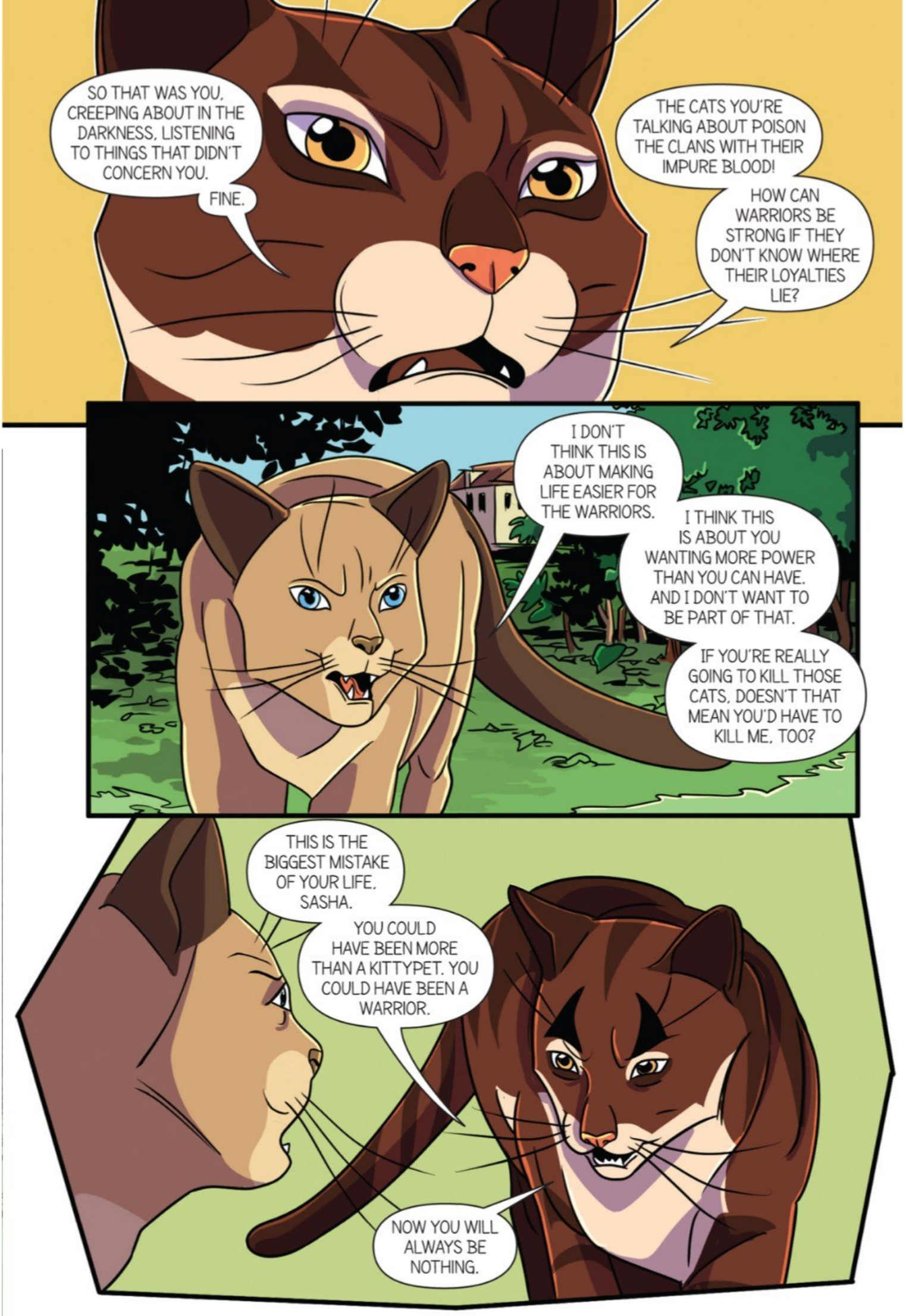
WARRIORS

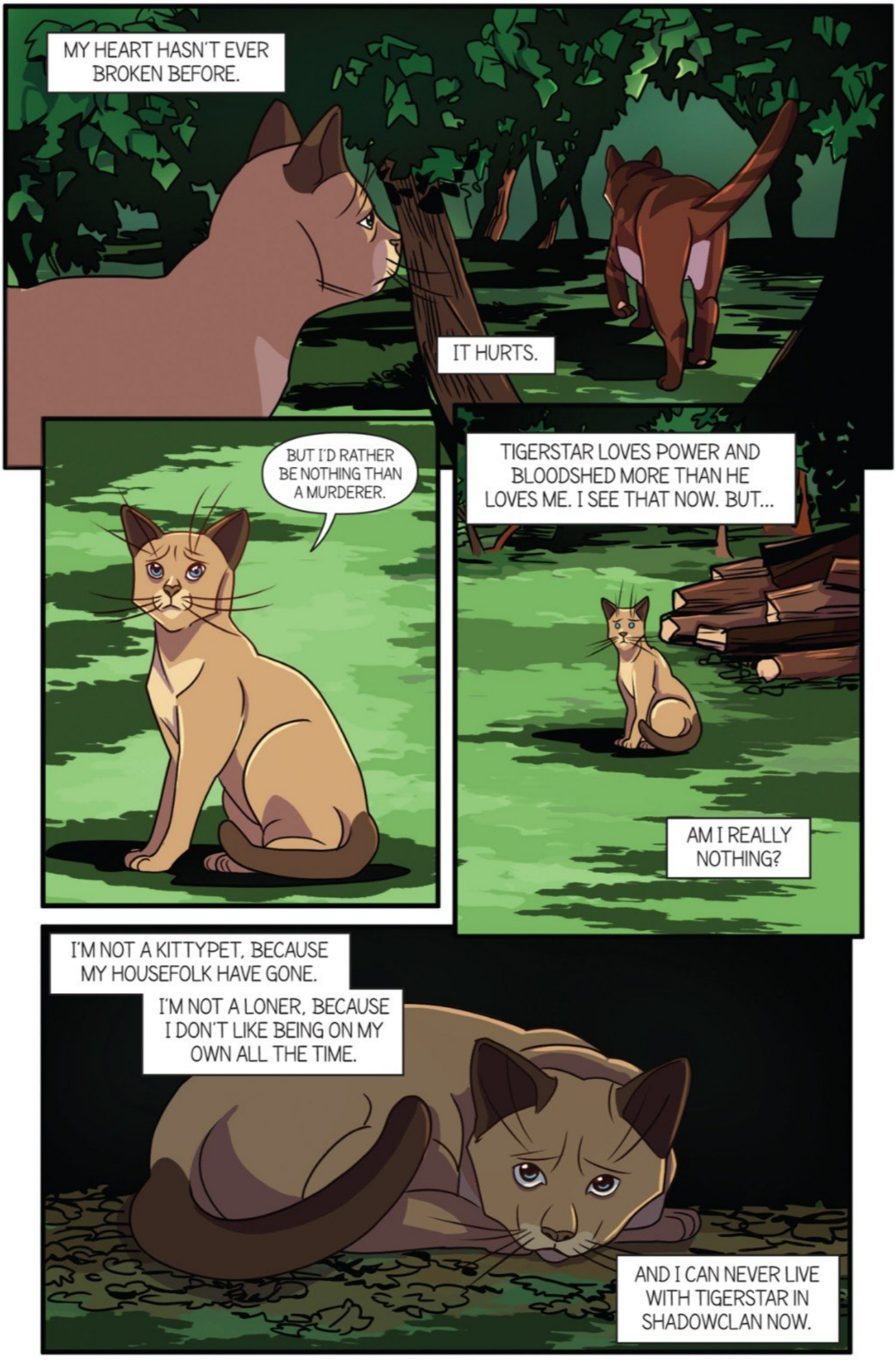
TIGERSTAR & SASHA

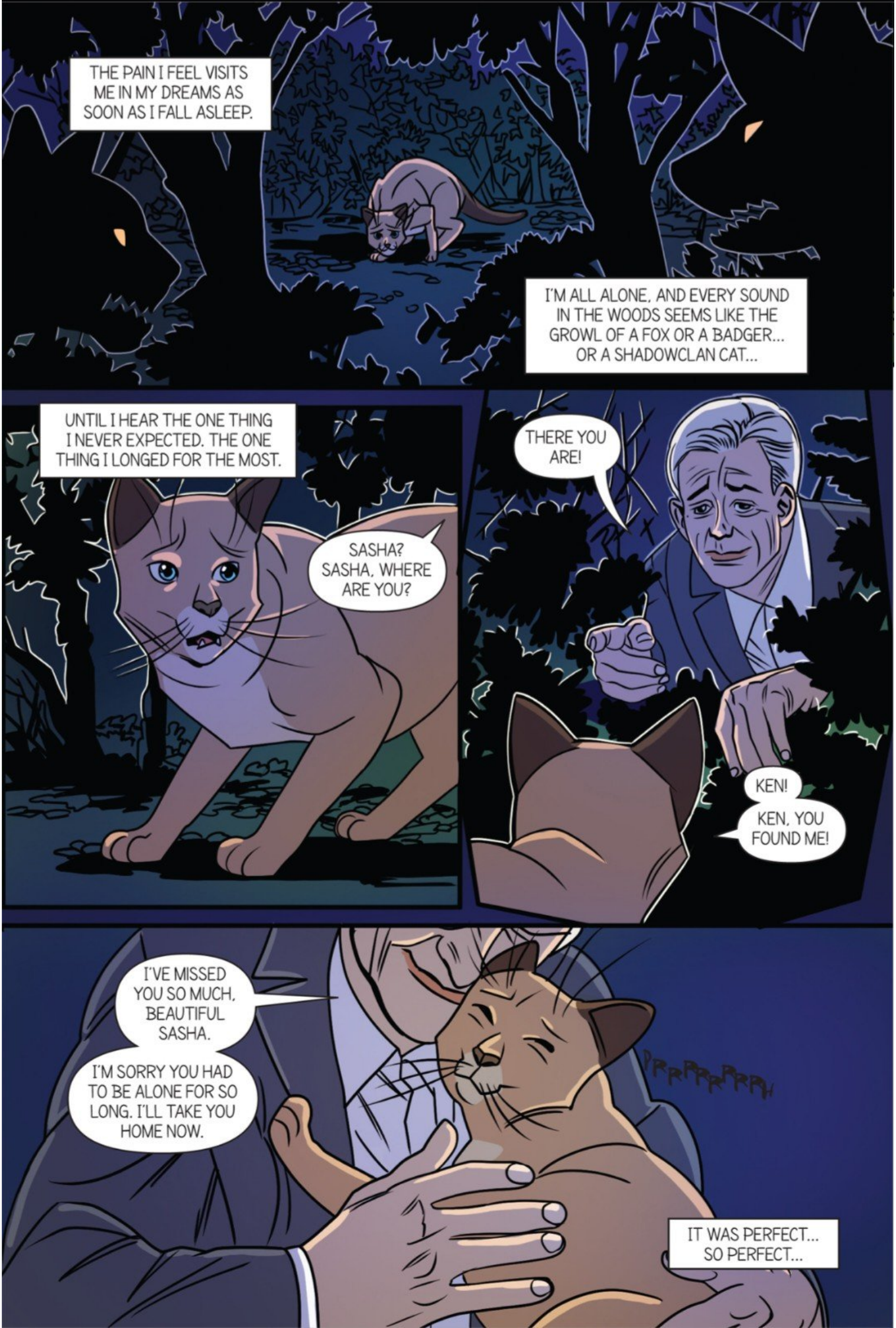
2: ESCAPE FROM THE FOREST

TIGERSTAR... I...NO.
I WON'T JOIN SHADOWCLAN.
WHAT?
I'M SORRY.
I CAN'T.
I WON'T.
BUT...SASHA, THINK WHAT I'M OFFERING YOU!
YOU WOULD BE BESIDE ME. EVERY CAT WOULD FEAR US.
I DON'T WANT TO BE FEARED! I WANT TO BE LOVED, AND I THOUGHT YOU LOVED ME.
I DO LOVE YOU.
I JUST THOUGHT...YOU WOULD UNDERSTAND...IT IS MY DESTINY TO RULE THE FOREST.
BUT IT'S NOT MINE.

I THOUGHT YOU UNDERSTOOD HOW IMPORTANT BEING LEADER OF MY CLAN IS TO ME.
I DO.
BUT WHAT YOU'RE TRYING TO DO GOES FAR BEYOND THAT--
BEYOND THE WARRIOR CODE YOU'VE TOLD ME ABOUT, TOO.
HOW CAN YOU CONSIDER KILLING ALL THE CATS THAT WEREN'T BORN IN THE FOREST?
OR WHOSE PARENTS COME FROM DIFFERENT CLANS?
THAT'S NOT THEIR FAULT!


SO THAT WAS YOU, CREEPING ABOUT IN THE DARKNESS, LISTENING TO THINGS THAT DIDN'T CONCERN YOU.
FINE.
THE CATS YOU'RE TALKING ABOUT POISON THE CLANS WITH THEIR IMPURE BLOOD!
HOW CAN WARRIORS BE STRONG IF THEY DON'T KNOW WHERE THEIR LOYALTIES LIE?
I DON'T THINK THIS IS ABOUT MAKING LIFE EASIER FOR THE WARRIORS.
I THINK THIS IS ABOUT YOU WANTING MORE POWER THAN YOU CAN HAVE. AND I DON'T WANT TO BE PART OF THAT.
IF YOU'RE REALLY GOING TO KILL THOSE CATS, DOESN'T THAT MEAN YOU'D HAVE TO KILL ME, TOO?
THIS IS THE BIGGEST MISTAKE OF YOUR LIFE, SASHA.
YOU COULD HAVE BEEN MORE THAN A KITTYPET. YOU COULD HAVE BEEN A WARRIOR.
NOW YOU WILL ALWAYS BE NOTHING.

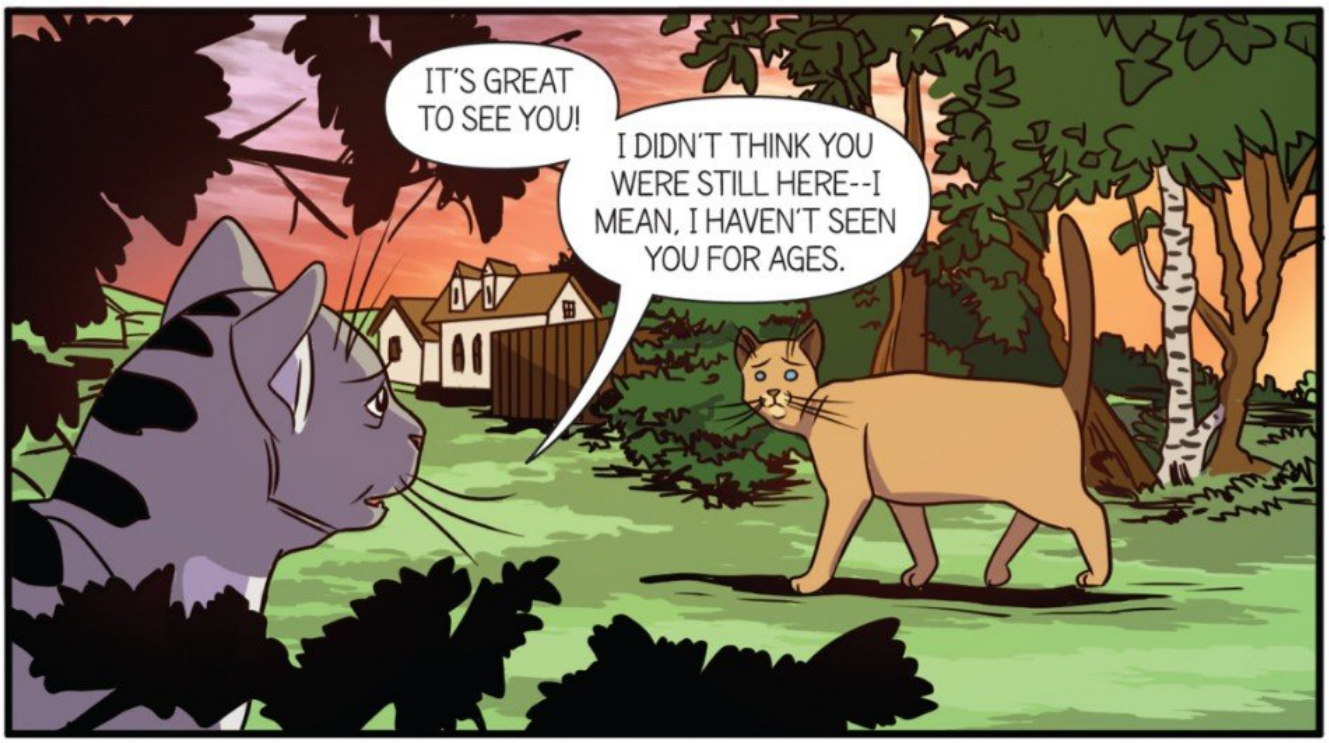

MY HEART HASN'T EVER BROKEN BEFORE.
IT HURTS.
BUT I'D RATHER BE NOTHING THAN A MURDERER.
TIGERSTAR LOVES POWER AND BLOODSHED MORE THAN HE LOVES ME. I SEE THAT NOW. BUT...
AM I REALLY NOTHING?
I'M NOT A KITTYPET, BECAUSE MY HOUSEFOLK HAVE GONE.
I'M NOT A LONER, BECAUSE I DON'T LIKE BEING ON MY OWN ALL THE TIME.
AND I CAN NEVER LIVE WITH TIGERSTAR IN SHADOWCLAN NOW.


THE PAIN I FEEL VISITS ME IN MY DREAMS AS SOON AS I FALL ASLEEP.
I'M ALL ALONE, AND EVERY SOUND IN THE WOODS SEEMS LIKE THE GROWL OF A FOX OR A BADGER... OR A SHADOWCLAN CAT...
UNTIL I HEAR THE ONE THING I NEVER EXPECTED. THE ONE THING I LONGED FOR THE MOST.
SASHA? SASHA, WHERE ARE YOU?
THERE YOU ARE!
KEN!
KEN, YOU FOUND ME!
I'VE MISSED YOU SO MUCH, BEAUTIFUL SASHA.
I'M SORRY YOU HAD TO BE ALONE FOR SO LONG. I'LL TAKE YOU HOME NOW.
PRRRRRRRRR!
IT WAS PERFECT... SO PERFECT...

A PERFECTLY CRUEL DREAM.
I COME TO A DECISION NOT LONG AFTER I WAKE.

THERE'S NOTHING KEEPING ME HERE. I CERTAINLY DON'T BELONG HERE. I HAVE TO LEAVE...
...AND I HAVE TO FIND KEN. WHEREVER HE IS.

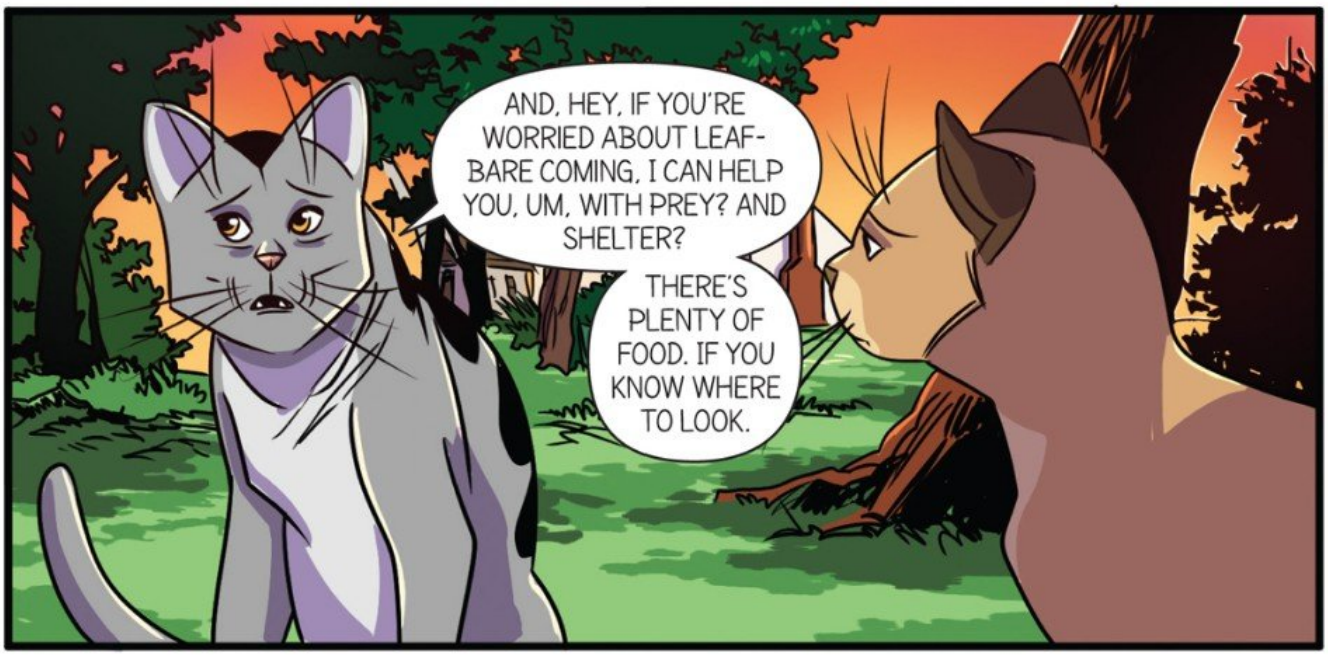
HEY, SASHA!


IT'S GREAT TO SEE YOU!
I DIDN'T THINK YOU WERE STILL HERE--I MEAN, I HAVEN'T SEEN YOU FOR AGES.

WHERE'VE YOU BEEN, ANYWAY?
I SMELL SOMETHING KIND OF...I DON'T KNOW, WEIRD.
OH NO....THAT MUST BE SHADOWCLAN HE'S SMELLING!

NO WAY AM I TELLING HIM ABOUT TIGERSTAR.
I, AH...I'M GLAD I RAN INTO YOU, PINE, BECAUSE...WELL, I NEED TO SAY GOODBYE.

OH--YOU'RE, YOU'RE LEAVING?
I WAS THINKING WE MIGHT HUNT TOGETHER OR, OR SOMETHING LIKE THAT...


AND, HEY, IF YOU'RE WORRIED ABOUT LEAF-BARE COMING, I CAN HELP YOU, UM, WITH PREY? AND SHELTER?
THERE'S PLENTY OF FOOD. IF YOU KNOW WHERE TO LOOK.

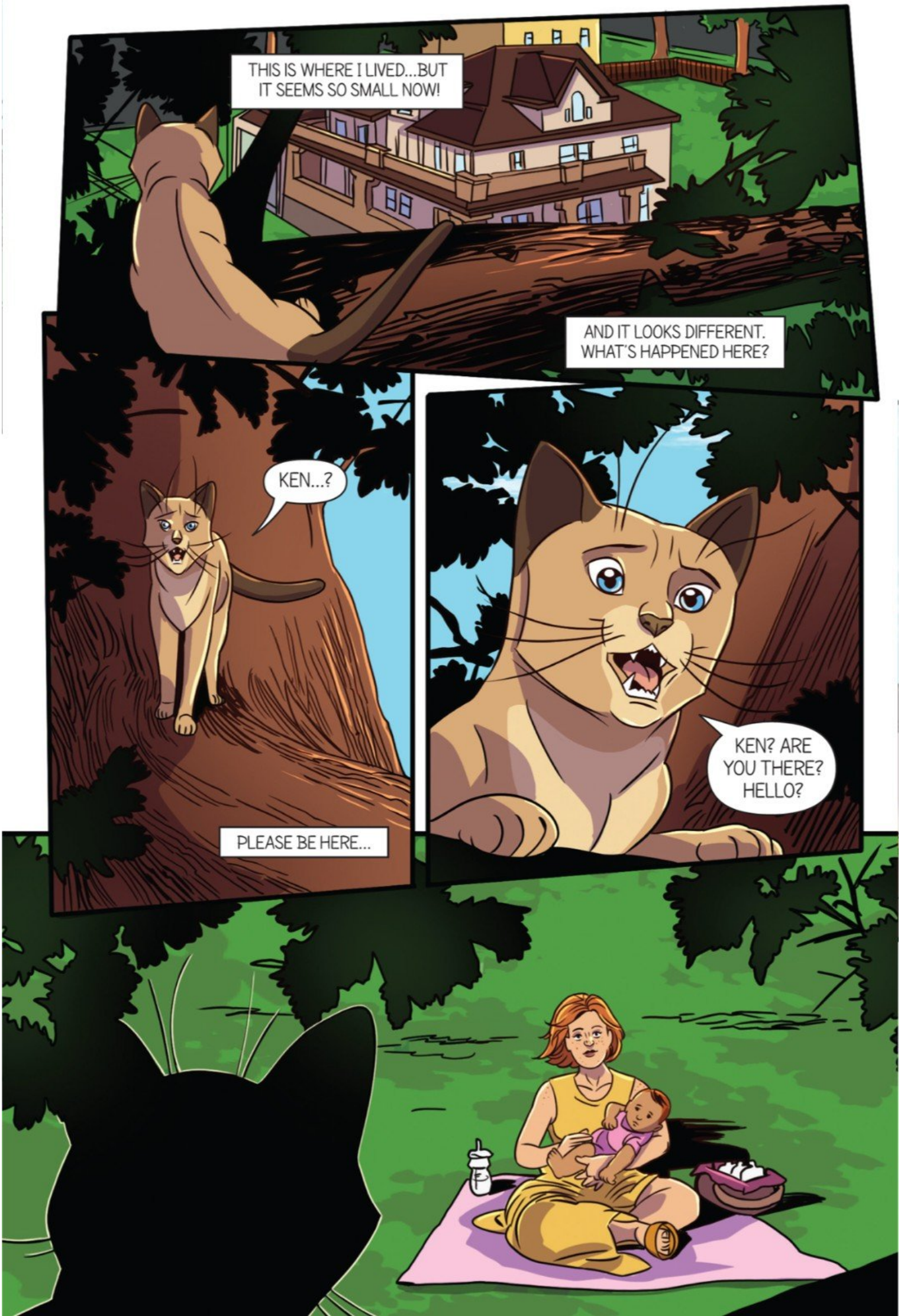
PLUS, UH, IF YOU'RE WORRIED...Y'KNOW, ABOUT BUMPING INTO ANY CLAN CATS...THERE'RE PLACES I CAN SHOW YOU.
DEEPER IN THE WOODS, I MEAN. THAT'S THE THING ABOUT THEIR BORDERS. THE CLANS DON'T CROSS THEM MUCH.
THANK YOU, PINE. IT'S VERY SWEET OF YOU TO OFFER.
BUT I HAVE TO FIND MY HOUSEFOLK. HIS NAME IS KEN, AND...
AND HE MUST BE MISSING ME TERRIBLY.
ALL RIGHT. WELL...
GOOD LUCK, SASHA. I REALLY HOPE YOU CAN FIND HIM.
I HOPE SO, TOO.
RIGHT NOW, KEN IS THE ONLY PART OF MY LIFE THAT MEANS ANYTHING.

I AVOID EVERYONE I KNOW, BACK HERE IN MY OLD TERRITORY.
I'D DIE OF EMBARRASSMENT IF THEY FOUND OUT HOW COMPLETELY I FAILED TO MAKE A LIFE ON MY OWN.

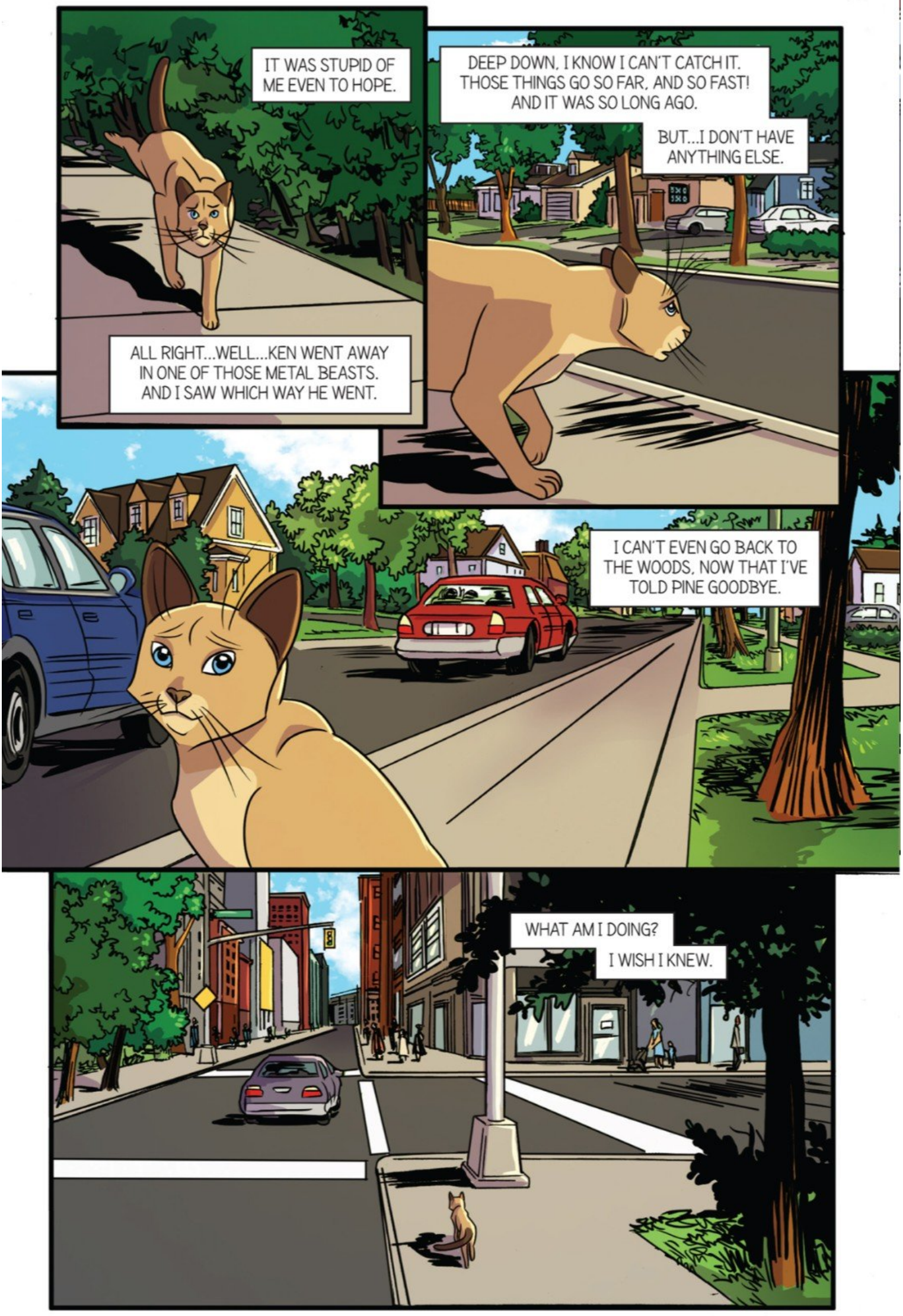
I DON'T EVEN WANT THE OTHER HOUSEFOLK TO SEE ME.

ONLY KEN.

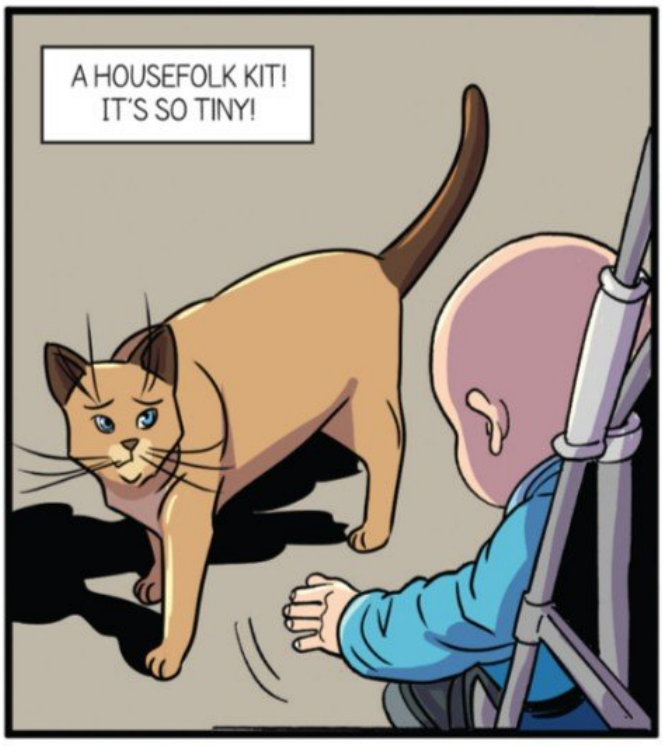
MAYBE HE'S COME BACK BY NOW...I HOPE HE'S COME BACK. PLEASE, PLEASE...


THIS IS WHERE I LIVED...BUT IT SEEMS SO SMALL NOW!
AND IT LOOKS DIFFERENT. WHAT'S HAPPENED HERE?
KEN...?
KEN? ARE YOU THERE? HELLO?
PLEASE BE HERE...

WHO'S THAT? WHAT'S SHE DOING HERE?
MRROW?
SCAT!
GET OUT OF HERE!
GET AWAY, YOU FILTHY CAT!
KEN'S NOT THERE. HE CAN'T BE THERE.


IT WAS STUPID OF ME EVEN TO HOPE.
DEEP DOWN, I KNOW I CAN'T CATCH IT. THOSE THINGS GO SO FAR, AND SO FAST! AND IT WAS SO LONG AGO.
BUT...I DON'T HAVE ANYTHING ELSE.
ALL RIGHT...WELL...KEN WENT AWAY IN ONE OF THOSE METAL BEASTS. AND I SAW WHICH WAY HE WENT.
I CAN'T EVEN GO BACK TO THE WOODS, NOW THAT I'VE TOLD PINE GOODBYE.
WHAT AM I DOING?
I WISH I KNEW.

I DON'T KNOW HOW LONG I'VE BEEN MOVING NOW.
I'M HUNGRY...MY PAWS HURT FROM WALKING ON THESE STONE PATHS... AND I HAVE NO IDEA WHERE I AM.
SO MANY HOUSEFOLK! BUT NONE OF THEM ARE KEN OR JEAN.


A HOUSEFOLK KIT! IT'S SO TINY!

SO MUCH...THERE'S SO MUCH HERE I'VE NEVER SEEN BEFORE...BUT I CAN'T STOP. I HAVE TO FIND KEN.
I HAVE TO.

THE SMELL OF PREY STARTLES ME SO MUCH, AT FIRST I THINK I'M DREAMING AGAIN.
IT'S COMING FROM THAT PLACE.
OH...I'VE GOT TO BE DREAMING...
THERE'S SO MUCH FOOD IN HERE! IT'S LIKE A GIANT FRESH-KILL PILE! I HAD NO IDEA HOUSEFOLK ATE THIS SORT OF THING!
SURELY THEY WON'T MIND IF I TAKE A BIT...
...JUST A LITTLE TINY BIT...

I WANT TO BUY THE KITTY!
I'M SORRY, HONEY, BUT WE DON'T SELL KITTIES.
YES YOU DO! THERE!
GOODNESS ME! WHAT A LOVELY CAT!
BUT SHE DOESN'T BELONG TO ME, I'M AFRAID.
OH NO--NO, DON'T! PLEASE, I JUST WANTED A LITTLE BIT...I'M SO HUNGRY!
GO HOME, THERE'S A GOOD GIRL.
MRRRAAOWW!

I SHOULD'VE KNOWN BETTER.
THIS IS NO PLACE FOR ME.
MAYBE TIGERSTAR WAS RIGHT.
MAYBE I AM NOTHING.

BUT...WAIT...WAIT...!

I SMELL SOMETHING. I...I...
...I CAN'T BELIEVE IT!
I SMELL KEN!

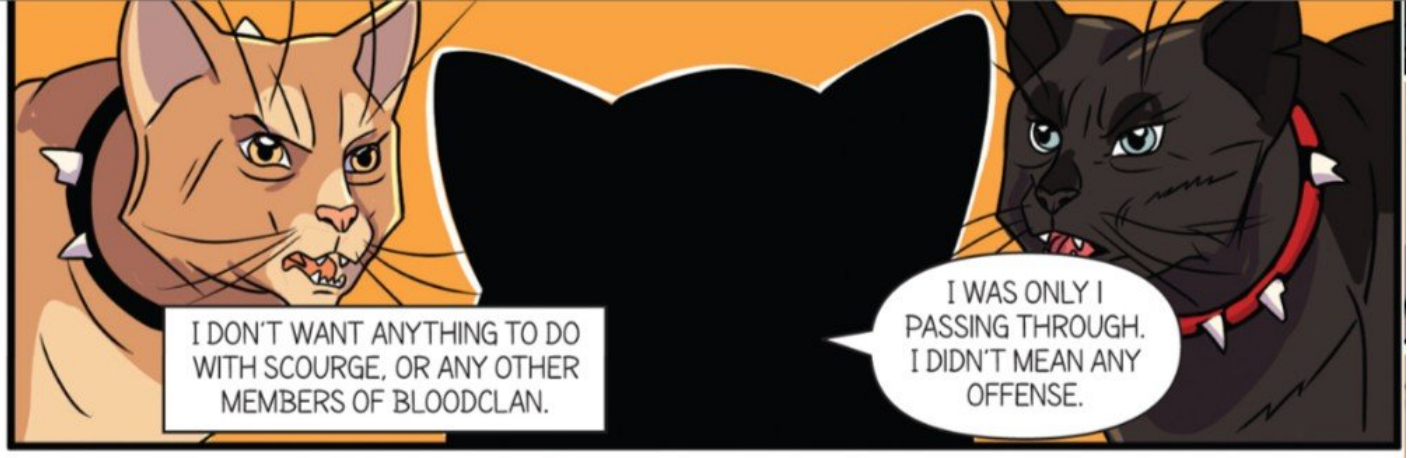
THAT HOUSEFOLK ISN'T KEN...
...BUT I DO SMELL HIS SCENT! I KNOW I DO. I'VE GOT TO GET CLOSER
DIDN'T CARE FOR THAT ONE, HUH?
IT FITS WELL ENOUGH. IT'S JUST... AHEM...IT SORT OF SMELLS LIKE OLD MAN.
YEAH, I DON'T BLAME YOU.
WE GET A LOT OF STUFF FROM, LIKE, NURSING HOMES, PLACES LIKE THAT.
ARE YOU SERIOUS? YOU MEAN THESE CLOTHES...
RIGHT. THE PEOPLE THEY BELONGED TO? AIN'T AROUND TO WEAR 'EM ANYMORE.

THIS DOES BELONG TO KEN! I WAS RIGHT!
AND THERE...THERE'S THAT LITTLE HOLE I PUT IN IT BY ACCIDENT.
JEAN WAS SO MAD WHEN I DID IT...BUT KEN JUST LAUGHED, AND SMILED, AND SCRATCHED ME BEHIND MY EARS.
BUT IF THIS IS KEN'S... WHY ISN'T HE HERE? WHERE COULD HE BE?
WHY CAN'T I FIND HIM...?
SOME PART OF ME, REALLY DEEP DOWN...SOME PART OF ME KNOWS SOMETHING'S WRONG. SOMETHING BAD.
BUT RIGHT NOW...I'M JUST TOO TIRED TO KEEP LOOKING.

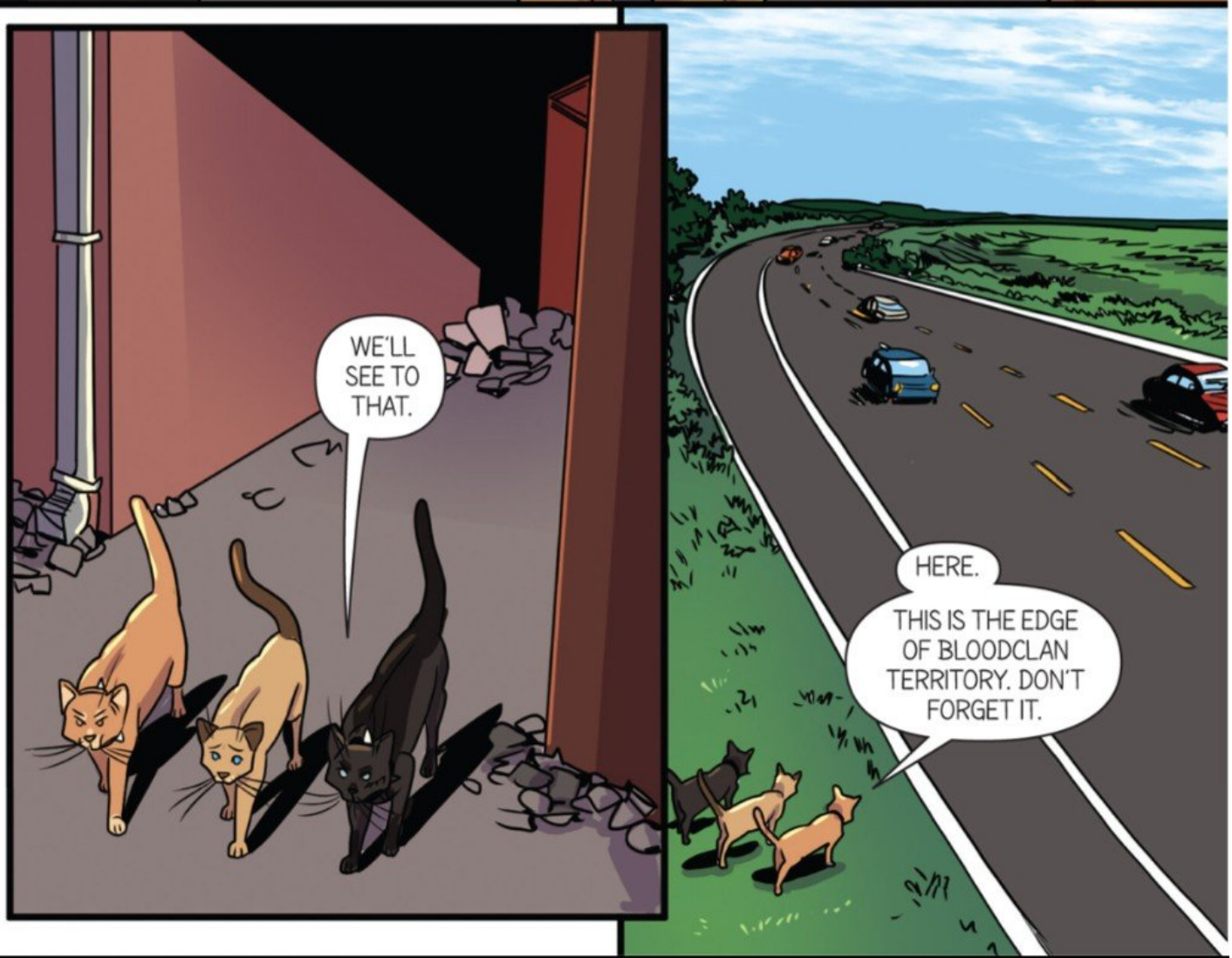
HEY!
GET OUT OF HERE, YOU FLEA-BITTEN MONSTER!
RRHEEEHHRR!
GO! GO, GET OUT!
MRRROOOWWRR!
THAT HOUSEFOLK STARTLED ME SO BADLY, I DON'T EVEN KNOW WHERE I AM.
IT TAKES ME A FEW SECONDS TO GET MY BEARINGS...
...BUT A FEW SECONDS IS ALL IT TAKES...
...TO GET INTO A BAD SPOT.

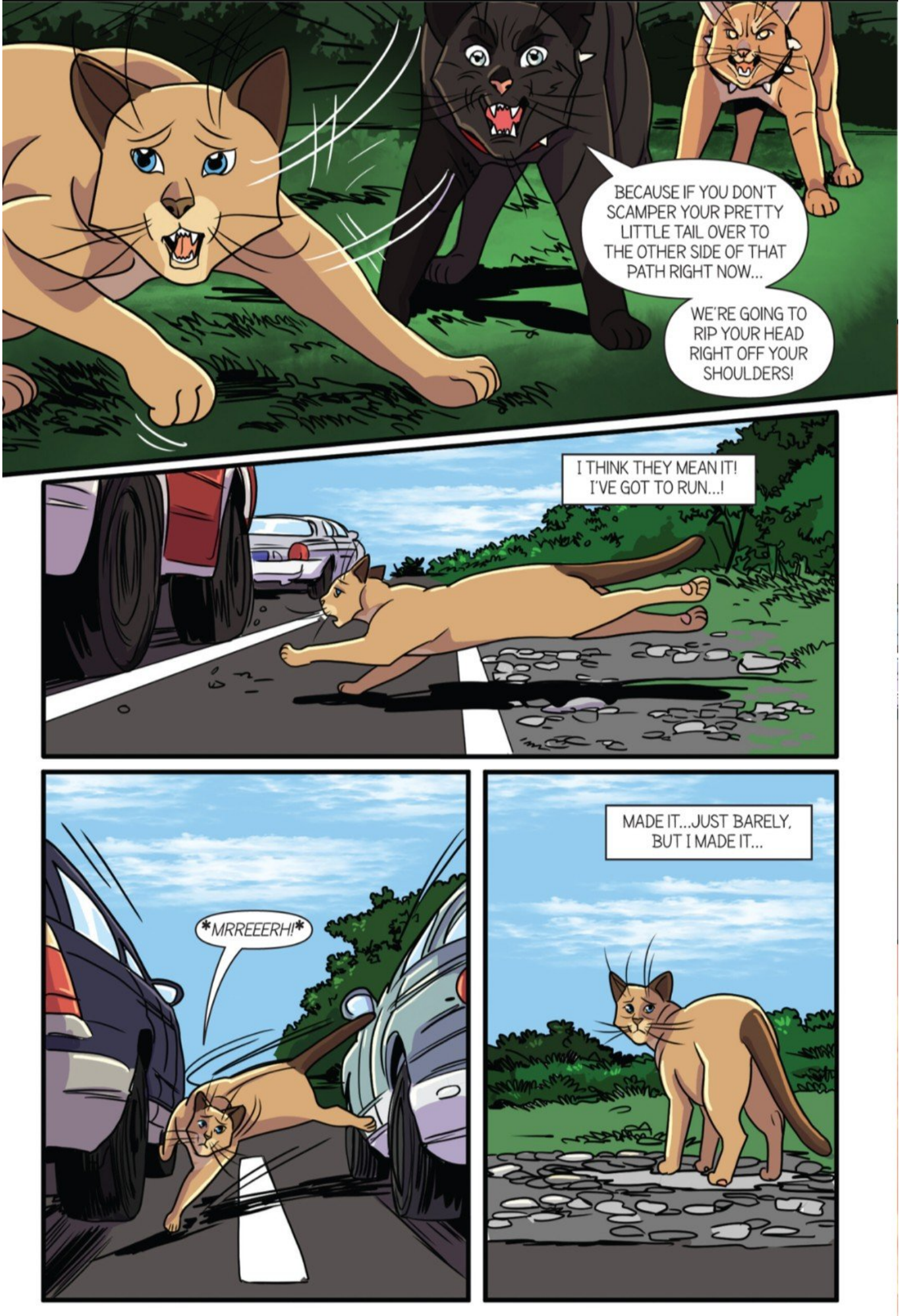
YOU'RE NOT WELCOME HERE.
BUT--I DON'T--
WE DIDN'T SAY YOU COULD SPEAK.
YOU'RE NOT OF BLOODCLAN. GET OUT OF HERE...
...UNLESS YOU WANT TO END UP IN FRONT OF SCOURGE.

SCOURGE! THE LEADER OF BLOODCLAN!
HE'S THE ONE BRINGING HIS WARRIORS TO THE FOREST, TO CONQUER ALL THE OTHER CLANS WITH TIGERSTAR!


I DON'T WANT ANYTHING TO DO WITH SCOURGE, OR ANY OTHER MEMBERS OF BLOODCLAN.
I WAS ONLY I PASSING THROUGH. I DIDN'T MEAN ANY OFFENSE.

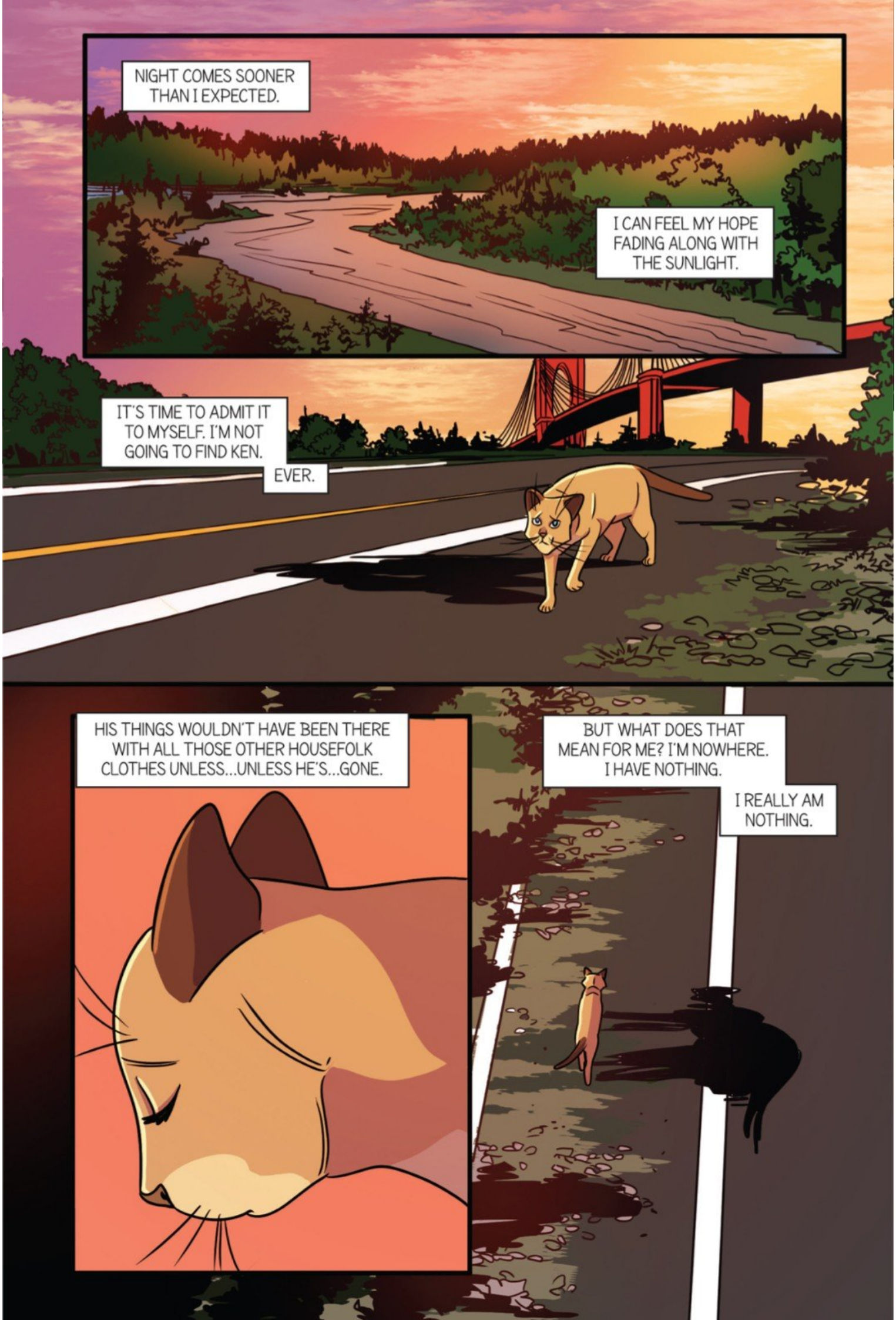
I HOPE NEITHER OF THEM NOTICES HOW TERRIFIED I AM!
I'LL JUST BE ON MY WAY NOW.
OH, YOU'LL BE ON YOUR WAY, ALL RIGHT.


WE'LL SEE TO THAT.
HERE.
THIS IS THE EDGE OF BLOODCLAN TERRITORY. DON'T FORGET IT.


BECAUSE IF YOU DON'T SCAMPER YOUR PRETTY LITTLE TAIL OVER TO THE OTHER SIDE OF THAT PATH RIGHT NOW...
WE'RE GOING TO RIP YOUR HEAD RIGHT OFF YOUR SHOULDERS!
I THINK THEY MEAN IT! I'VE GOT TO RUN...!
MRREEERH!
MADE IT...JUST BARELY, BUT I MADE IT...

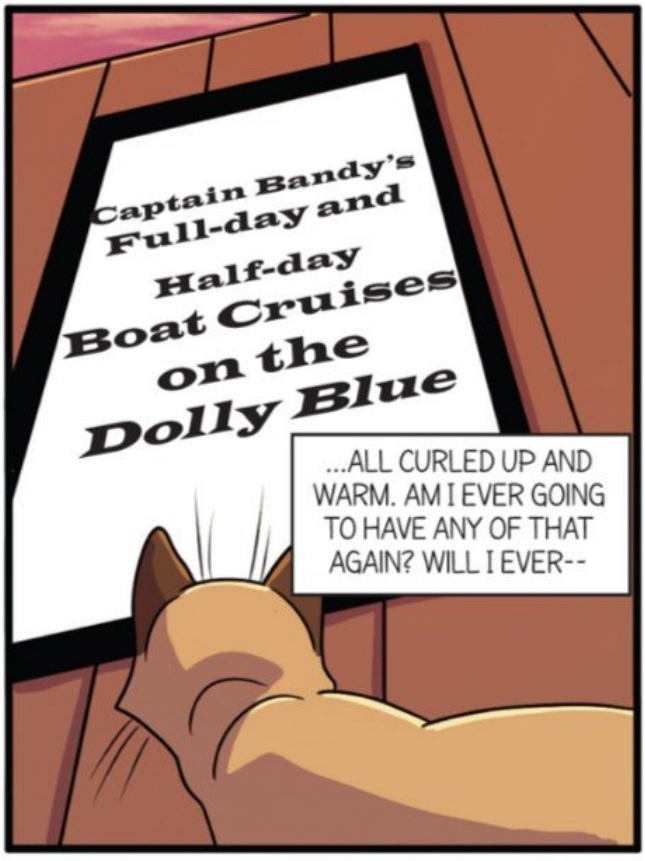
BUT WHAT DO I DO NOW?
I DON'T EVEN KNOW WHERE I AM.
LUXURY BOAT CRUISE COMPANY
7 Brand-New Pleasure Boats
Price Includes Audio Commentary
Plus All New Disco Cruises
ALL THESE PLACES AND THINGS I'VE NEVER SEEN BEFORE AND DON'T KNOW ANYTHING ABOUT...

SNIFF
SNIFF
OH! THAT'S SOMETHING I KNOW ABOUT.
THAT'S HOUSEFOLK FOOD! AND MY STOMACH HURTS, IT'S SO EMPTY.
MAYBE IF I SNEAK IN...DON'T LET ANYBODY SEE ME... MAYBE I CAN FIND SOME SCRAP OF SOMETHING...
WHOOOO-HOOOO!!
DID YOU SEE THAT, THE WAY SHANNON HURLED?
AWESOME, MAN, PURE AWESOME!
WHAT KIND OF PLACE IS THIS? ALL THOSE HOUSEFOLK WERE SO LOUD!


NIGHT COMES SOONER THAN I EXPECTED.
I CAN FEEL MY HOPE FADING ALONG WITH THE SUNLIGHT.
IT'S TIME TO ADMIT IT TO MYSELF. I'M NOT GOING TO FIND KEN.
EVER.
HIS THINGS WOULDN'T HAVE BEEN THERE WITH ALL THOSE OTHER HOUSEFOLK CLOTHES UNLESS...UNLESS HE'S...GONE.
BUT WHAT DOES THAT MEAN FOR ME? I'M NOWHERE. I HAVE NOTHING.
I REALLY AM NOTHING.

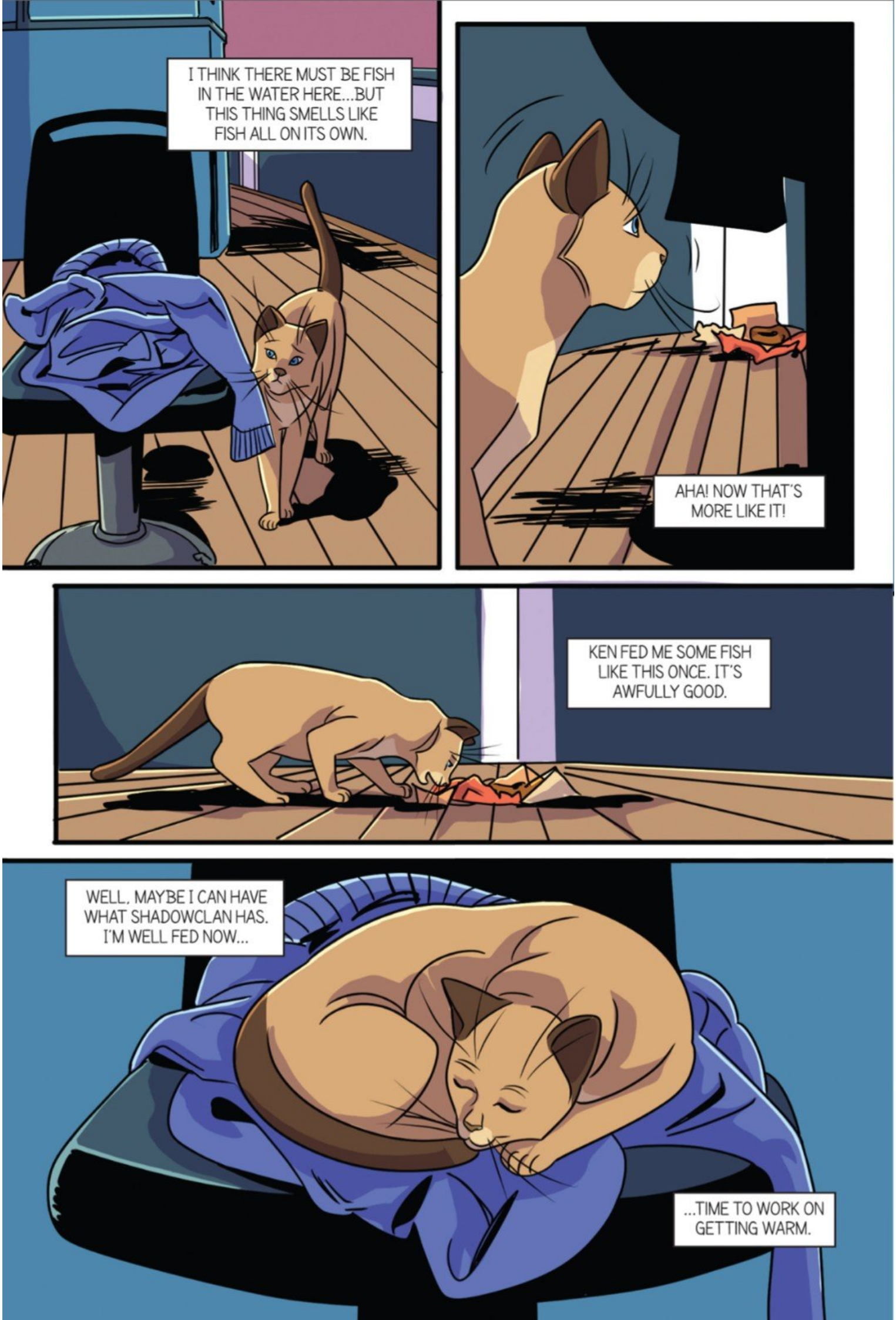
I TRY NOT TO THINK ABOUT IT, BUT...I CAN'T HELP IMAGINING THE SHADOWCLAN CATS RIGHT NOW.

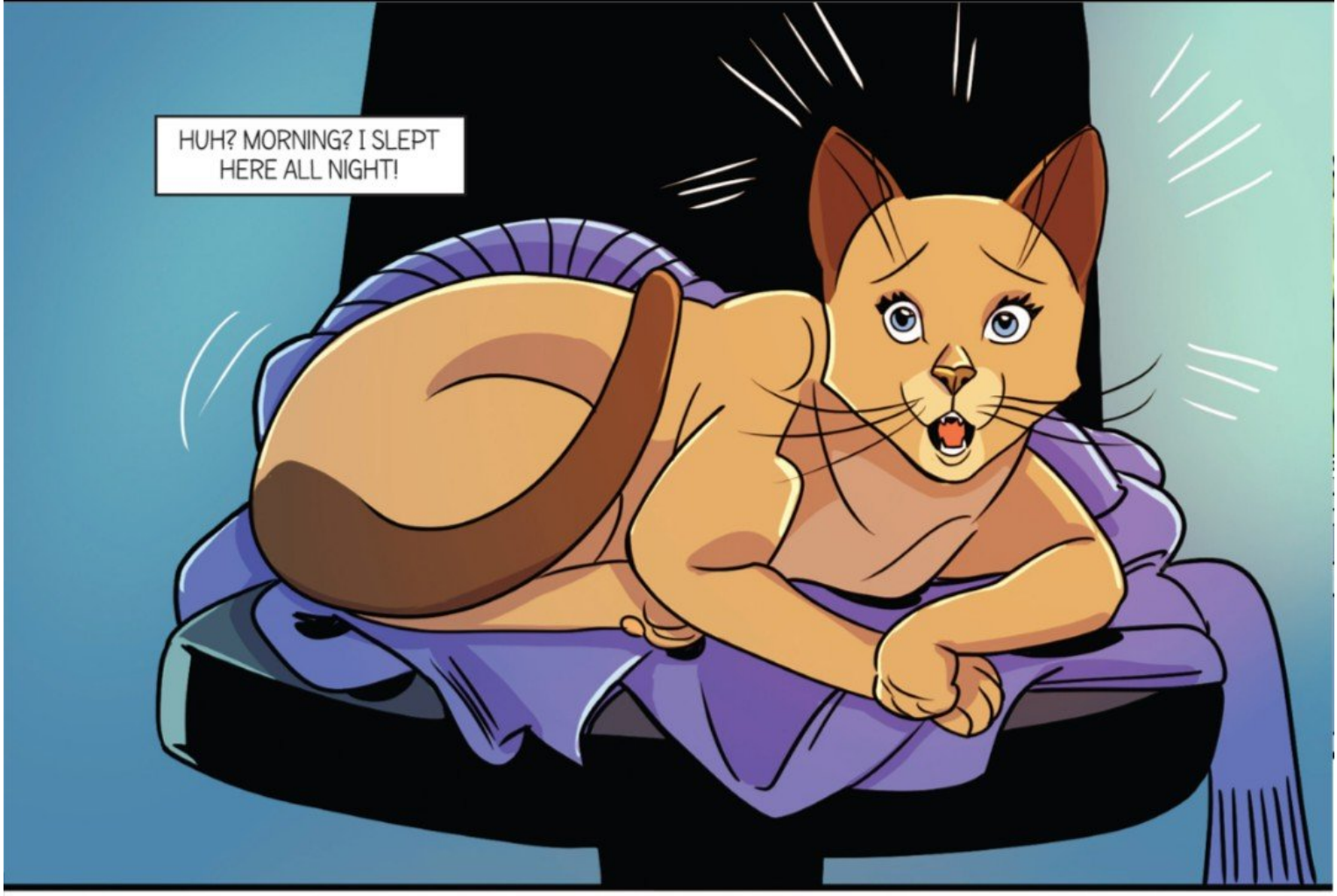
SETTLING DOWN FOR THE NIGHT....WELL FED...

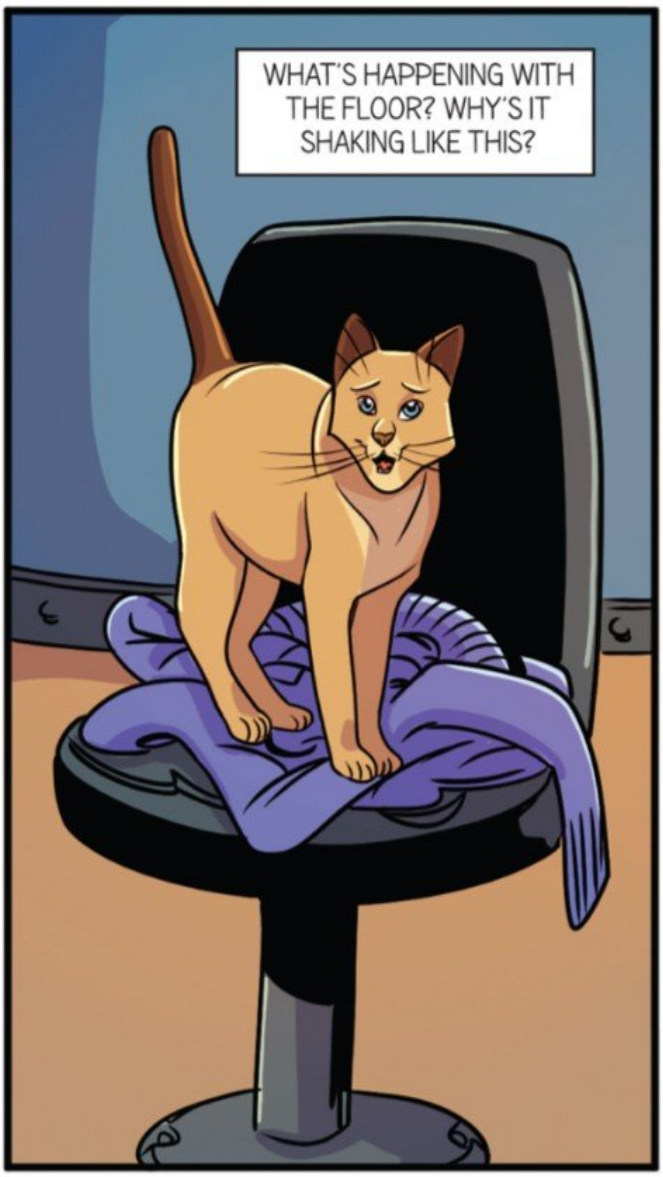

Captain Bandy's Full-day and Half-day Boat Cruises on the Dolly Blue
...ALL CURLED UP AND WARM. AM I EVER GOING TO HAVE ANY OF THAT AGAIN? WILL I EVER--

SNIFF
I SMELL FISH!

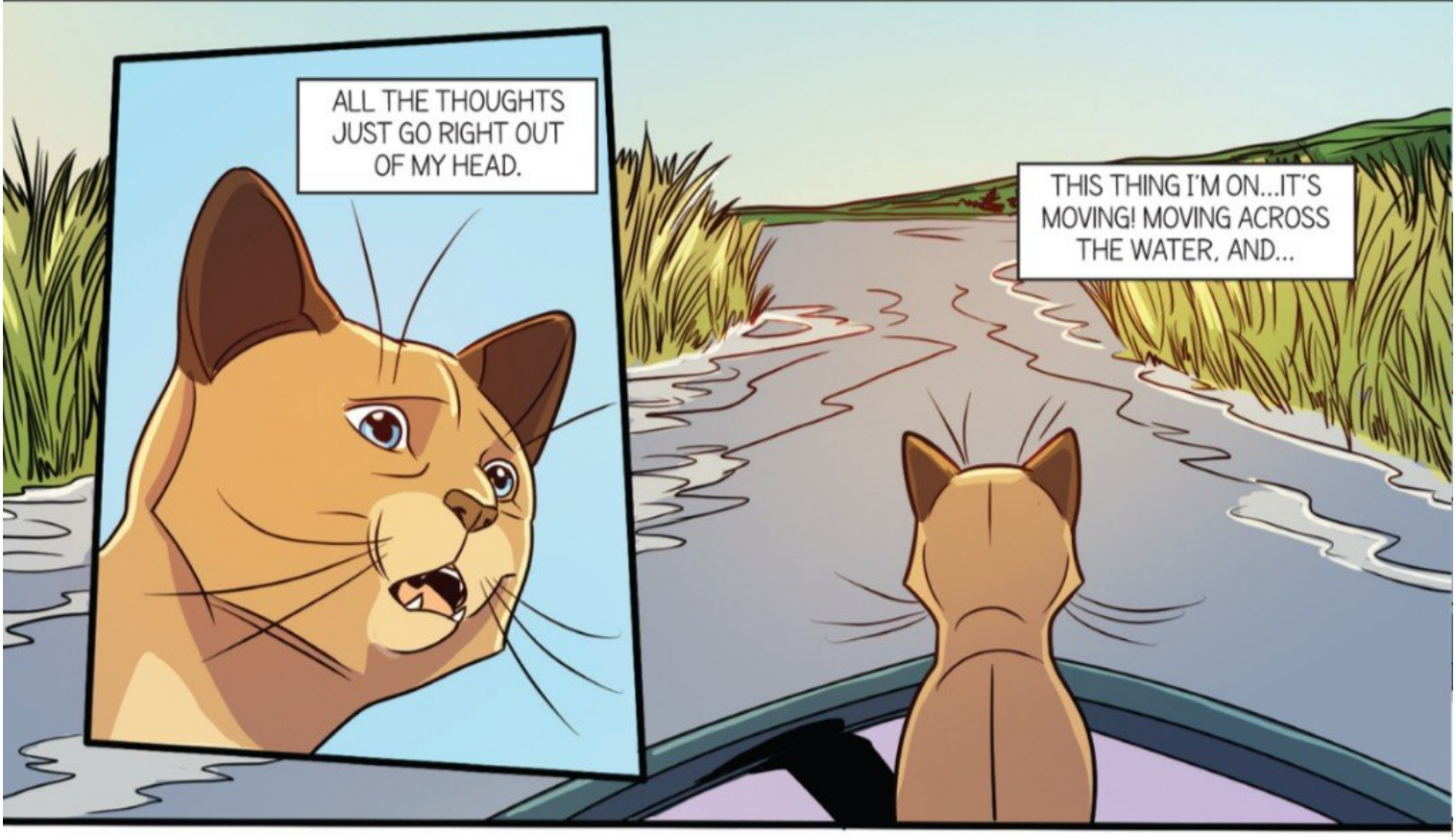
WELL...SO FAR, SO GOOD.
AT LEAST THERE AREN'T ANY OF THOSE CRAZY SCREAMING HOUSEFOLK AROUND HERE.
NEVER SEEN ANYTHING LIKE THIS BEFORE.
SEEMS HARMLESS ENOUGH, THOUGH.

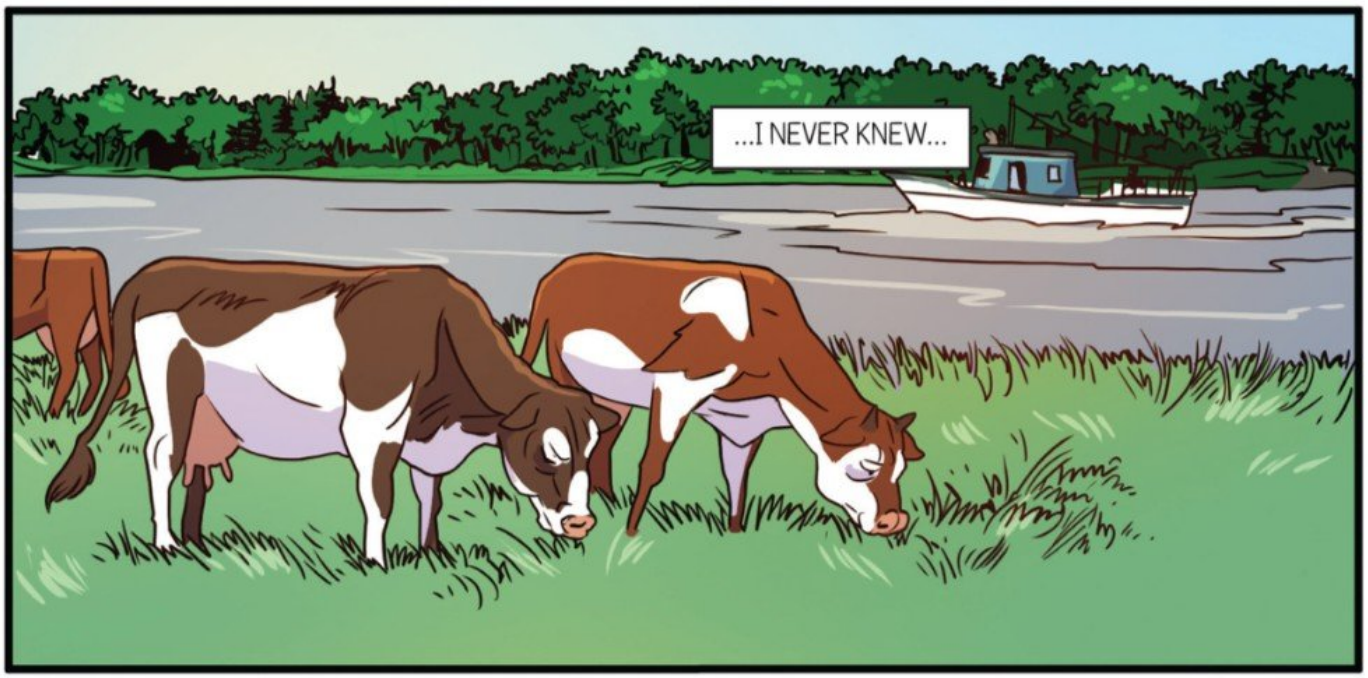

I THINK THERE MUST BE FISH IN THE WATER HERE...BUT THIS THING SMELLS LIKE FISH ALL ON ITS OWN.
AHA! NOW THAT'S MORE LIKE IT!
KEN FED ME SOME FISH LIKE THIS ONCE. IT'S AWFULLY GOOD.
WELL, MAYBE I CAN HAVE WHAT SHADOWCLAN HAS. I'M WELL FED NOW...
...TIME TO WORK ON GETTING WARM.


HUH? MORNING? I SLEPT HERE ALL NIGHT!


WHAT'S HAPPENING WITH THE FLOOR? WHY'S IT SHAKING LIKE THIS?

I'D BETTER JUMP OFF THIS THING AND GET TO--
GET TO...


ALL THE THOUGHTS JUST GO RIGHT OUT OF MY HEAD.
THIS THING I'M ON...IT'S MOVING! MOVING ACROSS THE WATER, AND...


...I NEVER KNEW...

...I NEVER KNEW THE WORLD COULD LOOK LIKE THIS...!

WHOA! CHECK IT OUT--IT'S A CAT!
THAT'S SO COOL!
IT'S A REAL LIVE SHIP'S CAT!
WHAT'S GOING ON?
I DON'T KNOW WHO THIS TALL, OLD HOUSEFOLK IS...
...BUT I KNOW IN A HEARTBEAT, HE'S THE ONE IN CHARGE HERE.

AND HE'S ANGRY! ANGRY AT ME! I'VE GOT TO GET OFF THIS THING, BUT...
BUT THERE'S NOWHERE TO GO!
SORRY, FOLKS. I'LL TAKE CARE OF THIS.
MEEP
IN YOU GO, KITTY. THAT'LL KEEP YOU OUT OF THE WAY 'TIL WE GET BACK TO THE DOCK.

NOW DON'T MAKE ANY NOISE, ALL RIGHT?
UGH...THIS PLACE IS AWFUL. I'M HOT...AND THIRSTY...AND I FEEL SICK FROM THE WAY THIS THING SHAKES AND WOBBLES.

I'D GIVE ANYTHING TO BE BACK IN THE FOREST, LYING IN THE COOL, FRESH GRASS...

WHAT HAVE I GOTTEN MYSELF INTO?
AND HOW DO I GET OUT OF IT...?

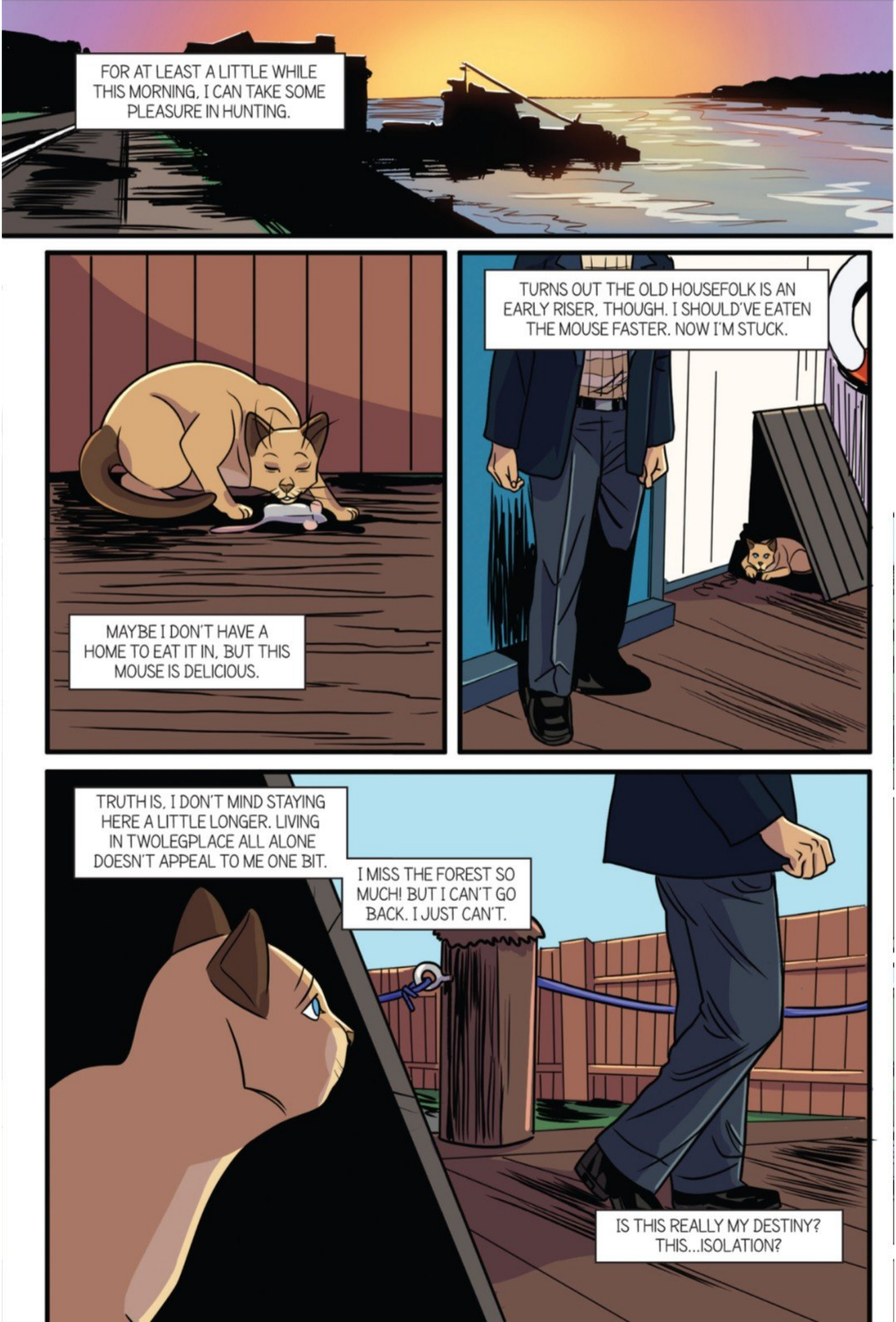
I HAVE NO IDEA HOW LONG I'VE BEEN SHUT UP IN HERE...
...BUT WHEN THE HOUSEFOLK FINALLY OPENS THE DOOR, THE AIR IS THE SWEETEST I'VE EVER TASTED.
TIME TO GO NOW, KITTY CAT.
SHOO, NOW. GO ON.
YOU DON'T BELONG HERE.

MUCH AS I HATED BEING LOCKED UP... WHEN I LOOK AT THE HOUSEFOLK'S OLD, WRINKLED FACE...

...I CAN'T HELP THINKING THAT HE REMINDS ME OF KEN. I CAN TELL HE'S LONELY AND SAD.

MAYBE NOT THE KIND OF SAD KEN WAS AFTER JEAN WENT AWAY...BUT STILL SAD.
I FEEL SORT OF SORRY FOR HIM.

THAT DOESN'T MAKE ME FEEL ANY BETTER, THOUGH. I REALLY WISH THE GROUND WOULD QUIT SWAYING UNDERNEATH ME.
NO WAY AM I GOING TO GO BACK INTO BLOODCLAN TERRITORY, ESPECIALLY NOT TONIGHT. ALL I WANT TO DO IS REST.

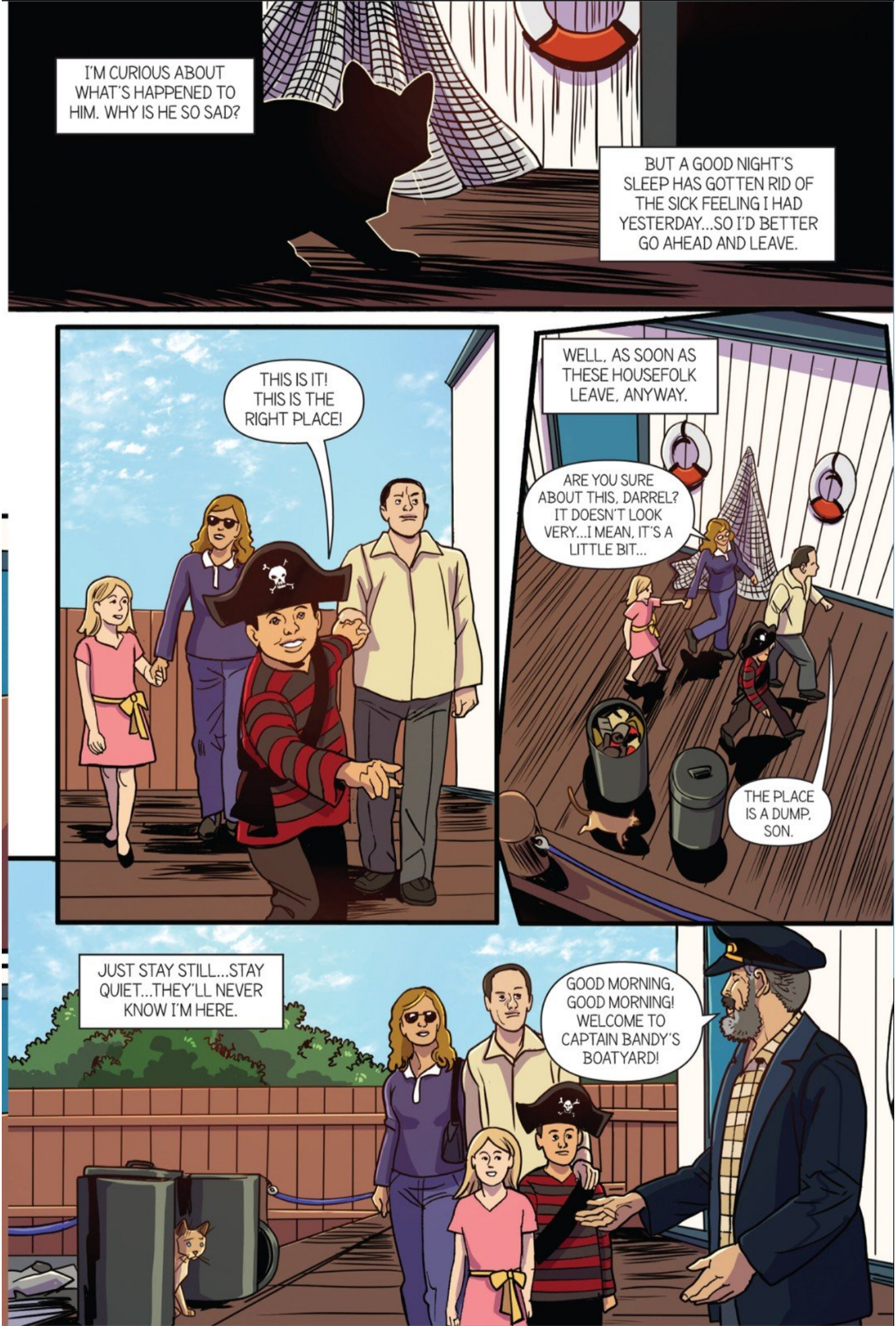

FOR AT LEAST A LITTLE WHILE THIS MORNING, I CAN TAKE SOME PLEASURE IN HUNTING.
MAYBE I DON'T HAVE A HOME TO EAT IT IN, BUT THIS MOUSE IS DELICIOUS.
TURNS OUT THE OLD HOUSEFOLK IS AN EARLY RISER, THOUGH. I SHOULD'VE EATEN THE MOUSE FASTER. NOW I'M STUCK.
TRUTH IS, I DON'T MIND STAYING HERE A LITTLE LONGER. LIVING IN TWOLEGPLACE ALL ALONE DOESN'T APPEAL TO ME ONE BIT.
I MISS THE FOREST SO MUCH! BUT I CAN'T GO BACK. I JUST CAN'T.
IS THIS REALLY MY DESTINY? THIS...ISOLATION?

I DON'T FULLY UNDERSTAND WHY...BUT AS THE MORNING GOES ON, I FIND MYSELF WATCHING THE OLD HOUSEFOLK.

MAYBE BECAUSE HE DOES MAKE ME THINK OF KEN. MAYBE BECAUSE I DON'T WANT TO GO BACK TO TWOLEGPLACE.

MAYBE BECAUSE...

...HE JUST LOOKS SO SAD.

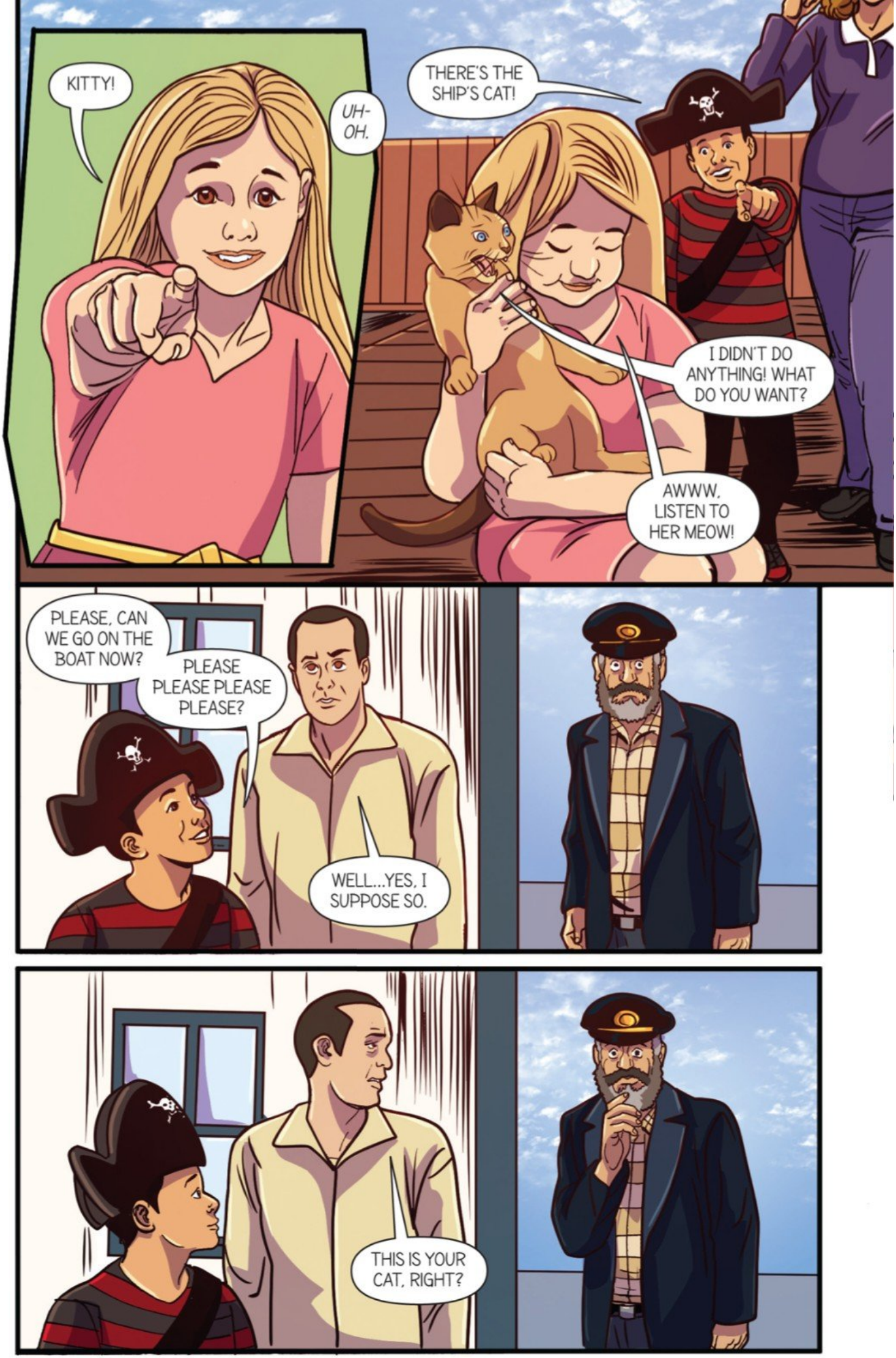

I'M CURIOUS ABOUT WHAT'S HAPPENED TO HIM. WHY IS HE SO SAD?
BUT A GOOD NIGHT'S SLEEP HAS GOTTEN RID OF THE SICK FEELING I HAD YESTERDAY...SO I'D BETTER GO AHEAD AND LEAVE.
THIS IS IT! THIS IS THE RIGHT PLACE!
WELL, AS SOON AS THESE HOUSEFOLK LEAVE, ANYWAY.
ARE YOU SURE ABOUT THIS, DARREL? IT DOESN'T LOOK VERY...I MEAN, IT'S A LITTLE BIT...
THE PLACE IS A DUMP, SON.
JUST STAY STILL...STAY QUIET...THEY'LL NEVER KNOW I'M HERE.
GOOD MORNING, GOOD MORNING! WELCOME TO CAPTAIN BANDY'S BOATYARD!

ARE YOU THE MAN WITH THE SHIP'S CAT?
UHH... BEG YOUR PARDON?
MY SON'S FRIEND HERE SAID SOMETHING ABOUT YOUR BOAT HAVING A CAT ON IT.
HE WOULDN'T REST UNTIL WE ALL CAME DOWN HERE TO SEE THE THING.
DARREL'S JUST MAD ABOUT PIRATES, YOU SEE. HE'D LOVE TO MEET A REAL SHIP'S CAT.

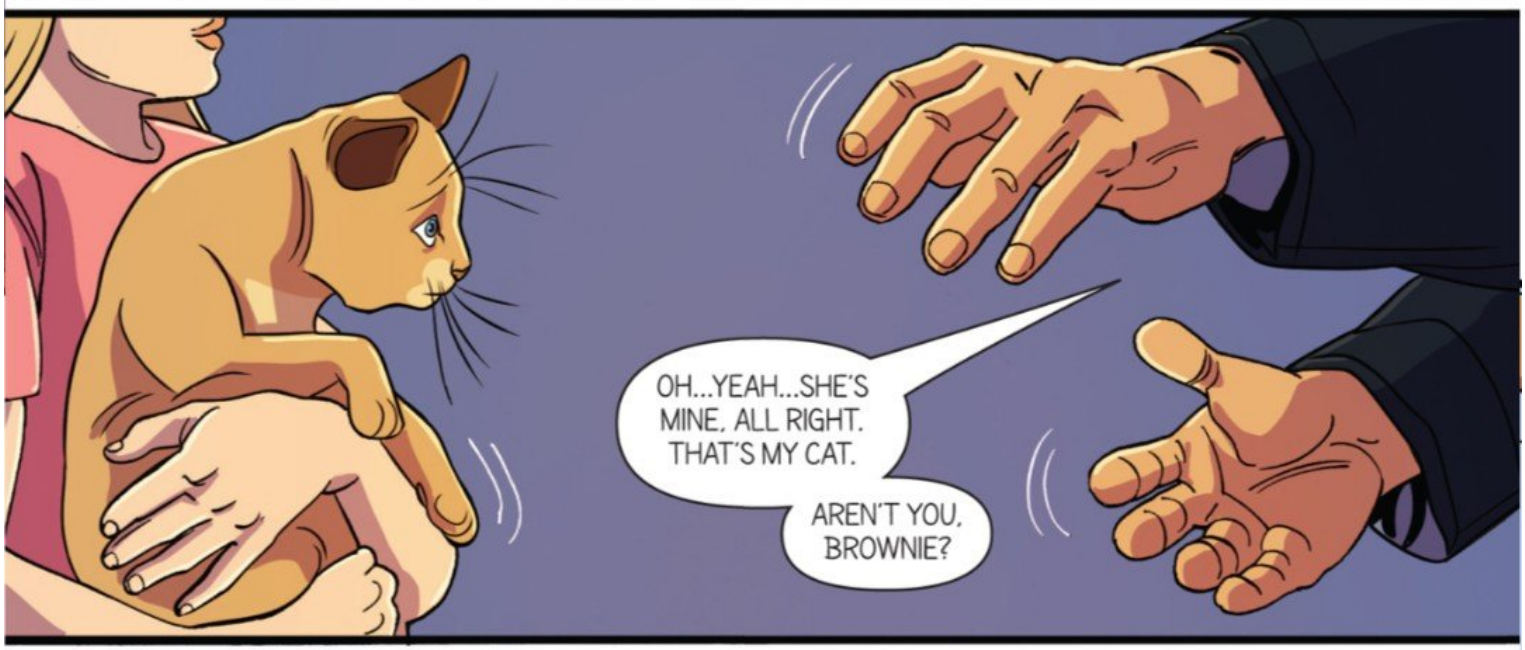
AH...THE, AH, THE CAT ISN'T HERE. THAT WAS A MISTAKE.
BUT MAYBE YOU'D LIKE A CRUISE ANYWAY...?
NOW THAT THEY'RE ALL TALKING TO EACH OTHER...

I CAN GET OUT WITHOUT ANYBODY SEEING M--

CLANG
-ANG
-ANG


KITTY!
UH-OH.
THERE'S THE SHIP'S CAT!
I DIDN'T DO ANYTHING! WHAT DO YOU WANT?
AWWW, LISTEN TO HER MEOW!
PLEASE, CAN WE GO ON THE BOAT NOW?
PLEASE PLEASE PLEASE PLEASE?
WELL...YES, I SUPPOSE SO.
THIS IS YOUR CAT, RIGHT?

I'M NOT SURE WHAT'S GOING ON HERE...


OH...YEAH...SHE'S MINE, ALL RIGHT. THAT'S MY CAT.
AREN'T YOU, BROWNIE?

...AND THIS HOUSEFOLK IS NO KEN. HE'S MUCH TOO CLUMSY.
BUT HIS HANDS ARE GENTLE.

MAYBE THIS WON'T BE TOO BAD.

IT IS KIND OF NICE TO HAVE A FUSS MADE OVER ME AGAIN.
I DON'T UNDERSTAND MUCH OF WHAT HOUSEFOLK MEAN WHEN THEY MAKE ALL THEIR NOISES. BUT I THINK I HEARD THIS ONE'S NAME.
I THINK IT'S THE CAPTAIN.
IT'S GOOD TO SEE HIM HAPPY.
I'M SO GLAD WE DECIDED TO TAKE THE TOUR!
YEAH! IF WE HADN'T SEEN PEOPLE GETTING ON BOARD, WE WOULDN'T HAVE REALIZED THE PLACE WAS EVEN OPEN!
HOW MUCH FOR A HALF DAY?

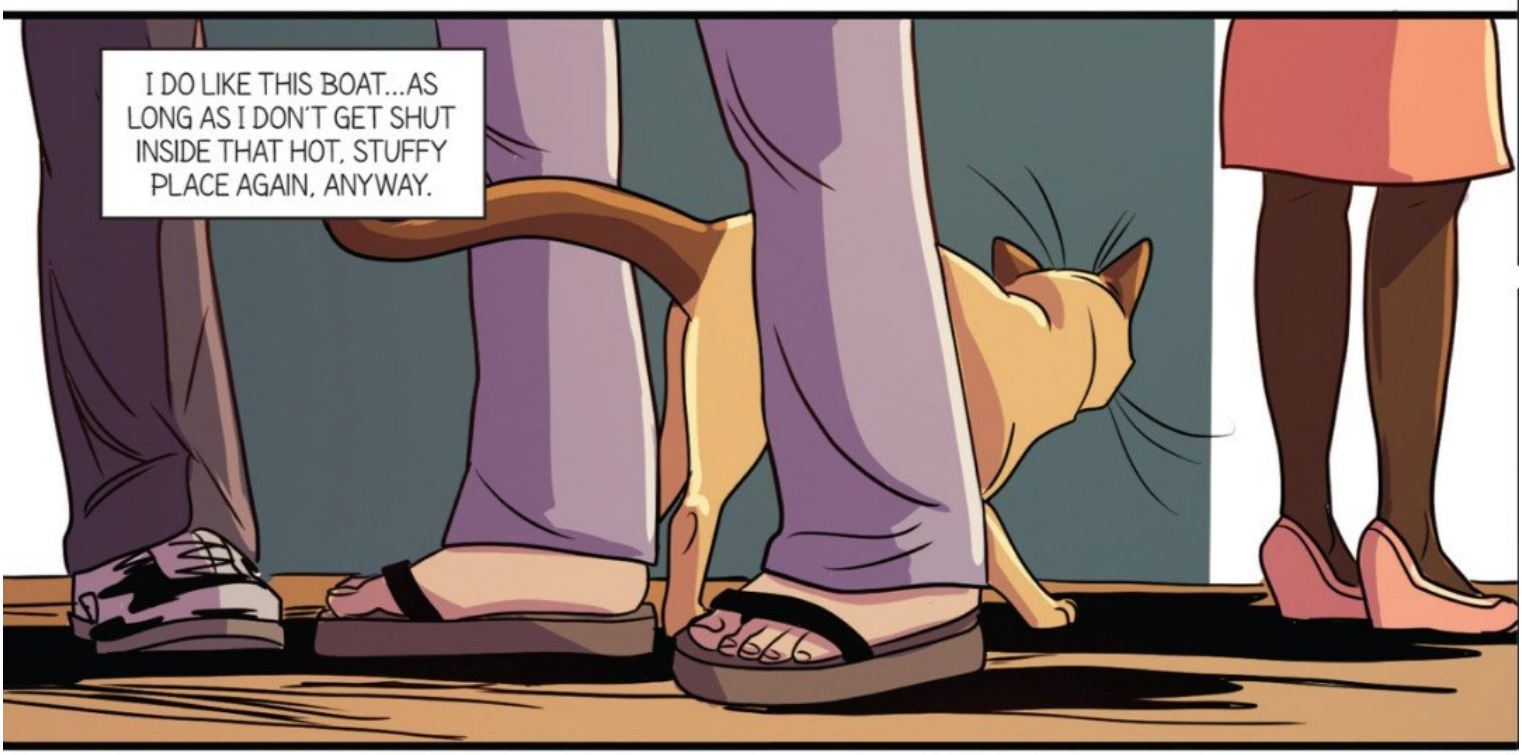
THERE GOES THAT SHAKING AGAIN!

SO...WHEN THE FLOOR SHAKES ON THIS THING--THIS BOAT, THEY CALLED IT--THAT MEANS WE GO OUT ON THE WATER.

IT REALLY SCARED ME AT FIRST, BUT...
I THINK I KIND OF LIKE THIS!

IT'S NOT THE FOREST.
BUT IT SURE BEATS BEING ALONE.

IT'S FUN, REALLY--SMELLING ALL THESE DIFFERENT SCENTS, FROM ALL SORTS OF DIFFERENT PLACES.


I DO LIKE THIS BOAT...AS LONG AS I DON'T GET SHUT INSIDE THAT HOT, STUFFY PLACE AGAIN, ANYWAY.

I'M HAVING SUCH A GOOD TIME, WANDERING AROUND THROUGH ALL THESE HOUSEFOLK, THAT BEFORE I REALIZE IT...

...I'M RIGHT NEXT TO THE CAPTAIN.

OH--DON'T PUT ME IN THE STUFFY PLACE!
WELL, HEY THERE, BROWNIE.
YOU ARE A CUTE ONE, AREN'T YOU?
WHO'D HAVE GUESSED A STOWAWAY WOULD BE SUCH A BIG ATTRACTION?
OOH, THAT'S NICE. AND I LIKE THE WAY HE SMELLS.
MAYBE YOU'LL BRING ME BETTER LUCK IF YOU STICK AROUND.
I GUESS IT'S OKAY TO STAY HERE FOR A LITTLE WHILE.

THESE HOUSEFOLK ARE SO NICE...NOT AT ALL LIKE THE ONES WHO YELLED AT ME.
THANK YOU, CAPTAIN. THE CRUISE WAS GREAT.
AND BROWNIE IS JUST THE BEST! SHE'S SO ADORABLE!
THANK YOU, THANK YOU. THANK YOU, COME AGAIN!
THEY REALLY LIKE THE CAPTAIN AND HIS BOAT...AND I THINK THAT'S PARTLY BECAUSE OF ME!
I HELPED HIM.
AND THAT MEANS I'M NOT NOTHING.
THAT'S RIGHT, TIGERSTAR. I'M *NOT* NOTHING.

BUT NOW THAT EVERYBODY'S GOING...I GUESS THAT MEANS I HAVE TO GO, TOO?
YEAH...THE CAPTAIN'S HEADING TO HIS DEN.
I'LL TRY NOT TO MAKE ANY NOISE WHEN I LEAVE THIS TIME.
WHICH WAY NOW? I MIGHT BE ABLE TO FIND MORE NICE HOUSEFOLK BACK TOWARD TWOLEGPLACE. MAYBE.
OR MAYBE I COULD FOLLOW THE WATER, TO WHERE I SAW THE TREES AND THOSE GIANT THINGS WITH HORNS.

BROWNIE!
HUH?
BROWWWWNIE!
C'MERE, GIRL! I'VE GOT SOME CHICKEN FOR YOU!
BROWNIE...THAT'S WHAT HE CALLS ME!

THERE YOU ARE.
RECKON YOU'VE EARNED THIS.

I HOPE YOU'LL STAY FOR A WHILE.
DOES THIS MEAN... THAT HE WANTS ME TO STAY?

I GOT USED TO FINDING MY OWN FOOD IN THE FOREST. I'VE COME TO PREFER IT.
BUT I'M NOT STUPID.
THERE YOU GO! THERE'S A GOOD GIRL.

C'MON... FOLLOW ME, THAT'S RIGHT.
HE'S BEING SO NICE! I JUST HOPE HE DOESN'T WANT ME TO STAY IN THAT LITTLE STUFFY PLACE AGAIN!

I SAW HOW MUCH YOU LIKED MY SWEATER. HERE, IT'S YOURS NOW.
OH, THANK GOODNESS.
IT'S WARM HERE... AND I FEEL SAFE...

...AND I'VE EVEN GOTTEN USED TO THE WAY THE BOAT SWAYS A LITTLE ON THE WATER.
I COULD GET USED TO THIS...

PRRRRRRH
I THINK OF THE FOREST AS MY HOME NOW. I LOVE IT THERE.
BUT IF I CAN'T GO BACK...WELL...
I CAN THINK OF WORSE PLACES TO BE THAN HERE.

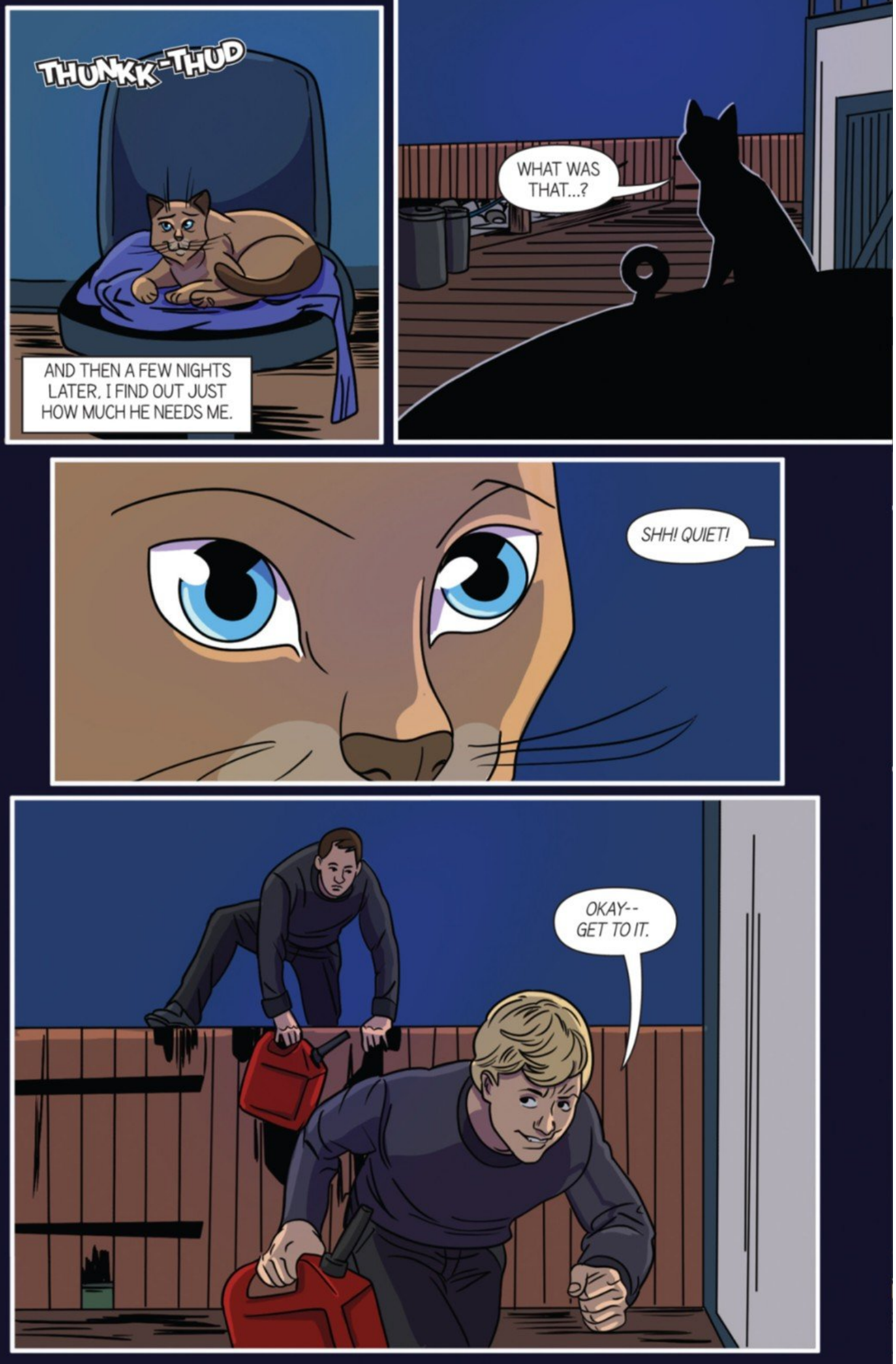
I SORT OF LOSE TRACK OF THE DAYS FOR A WHILE.
THE CAPTAIN SEEMS HAPPY ALMOST ALL THE TIME NOW.
HOME OF BROWNIE
THE FAMOUS SHIP'S CAT
HE EVEN GOT NEW THINGS TO WEAR. HE STILL SMELLS THE SAME, THOUGH, AND I'M GLAD ABOUT THAT.
I CAN TELL THE CAPTAIN LIKES IT WHEN THERE ARE A LOT OF HOUSEFOLK HERE...
...AND THE HOUSEFOLK LIKE IT WHEN I'M HERE. IT'S NOT HARD TO PURR AND NUZZLE AND LET THEM PET ME.

MORE THAN ALL THE NICE HOUSEFOLK, THOUGH, I LOVE BEING ON THE BOAT!
I ONLY WISH THAT KEN AND JEAN COULD BE HERE WITH ME.
THE SUN RISES AND SETS...
STOWAWAY
...RISES AND SETS...

...AND ONE MORNING I REALIZE...
...I'M HAPPY.
BUT I'M BEGINNING TO LEARN THAT HAPPINESS DOESN'T LAST FOREVER.
I'M AFRAID I'VE BEEN FEEDING YOU TOO MANY SCRAPS, GIRL!
YOU'RE STARTING TO GET A LITTLE CHUNKY.

I LIKE IT WHEN THE CAPTAIN FEELS GOOD...
...AND SO WHEN SOMETHING MAKES HIM UNHAPPY, I NOTICE RIGHT AWAY.
GOOD-FER-NOTHIN', FLASHY, DISRESPECTFUL LITTLE... *GRUMBLE GRUMBLE*
HE DOESN'T LIKE THE FLASHY BOAT. I WONDER WHY? MAYBE HE THINKS IT'S TOO LOUD?
SOMETIMES I WISH I COULD ASK HIM.

I'M WARM. I HAVE ALL THE FOOD I NEED. THE CAPTAIN LOVES ME.
BUT WHAT I CAN FEEL IN MY BELLY NOW JUST MAKES ME CERTAIN OF WHAT I KNEW ALL ALONG.
THE LIFE OF A KITTYPET IS NOT MY DESTINY.
MAYBE IT'S TIME TO MOVE ON?
TOO-RA-LOO... TOO-RA-LA-LA-LA-LOOO...
NO...NOT YET.
THE CAPTAIN NEEDS ME.


THUNKK-THUD
AND THEN A FEW NIGHTS LATER, I FIND OUT JUST HOW MUCH HE NEEDS ME.
WHAT WAS THAT...?
SHH! QUIET!
OKAY-- GET TO IT.

HEH HEH... THIS'LL TEACH HIM.
HIM AND THAT STUPID CAT.
THOSE HOUSEFOLK SHOULDN'T BE HERE! I'VE GOT TO WAKE UP THE CAPTAIN!
BUT HOW?
OOOH...
PERFECT.
CLANGK-TANG
CLANG

WHAT WAS THAT?
SOMEBODY SAW US!
RUN!
HRRK!
AOWW!
WHAT'S THIS? WHAT'S GOING ON OUT HERE?
BROWNIE? IS THAT YOU?

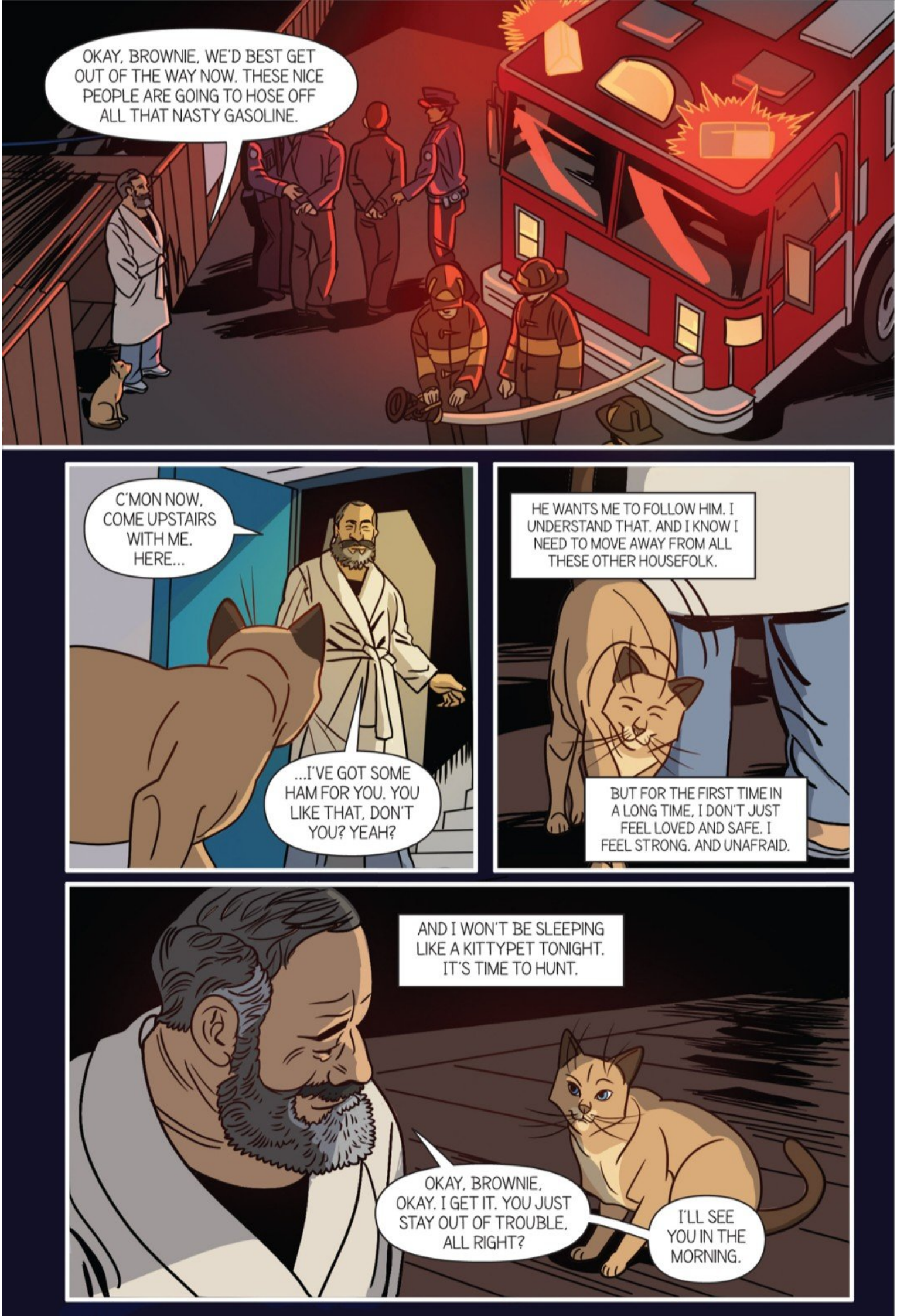
GASOLINE...?
HOW DARE YOU!
YOU COWARDLY CURS!
KEEP AN EYE ON 'EM, BROWNIE!
I'M CALLIN' THE COPS!
AS USUAL, I HAVE NO IDEA WHAT THE CAPTAIN MEANS. BUT THESE TWO TRIED TO HURT HIM, I'M PRETTY SURE OF THAT.
SO THEY'RE NOT GOING ANYWHERE.

I CAN'T THANK YOU ENOUGH, BROWNIE.
YOU SAVED ME.

SIR?
DO YOU RECOGNIZE EITHER OF THESE MEN?

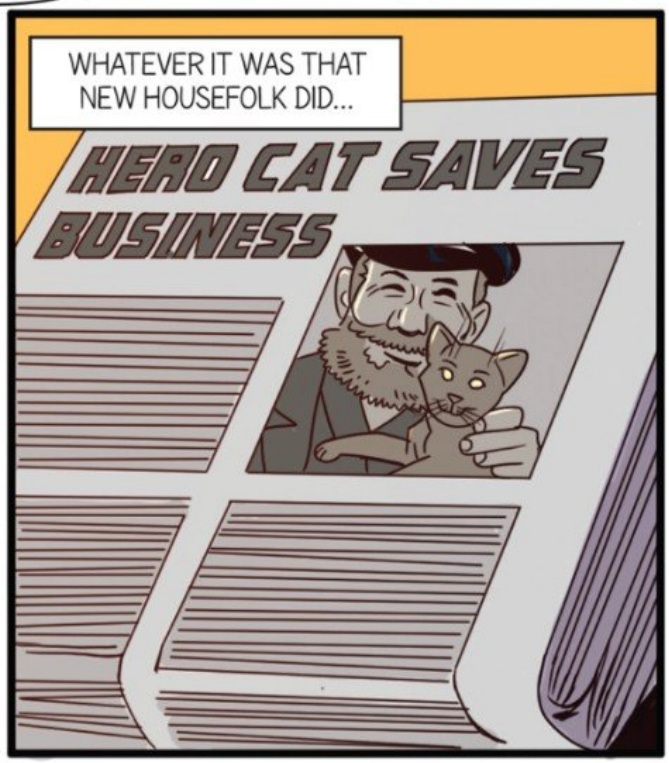
WELL, I'LL BE SWITCHED!
BOTH OF 'EM WORK DOWN AT THE LUXURY BOAT CRUISE COMPANY! THAT NEW PLACE, JUST DOWN THE RIVER!
THEY MUST'VE BEEN JEALOUS OF HOW MANY CUSTOMERS I'VE HAD LATELY!

WE'LL SEE THAT THEY'RE CHARGED, SIR.
THAT'S ONE VALUABLE FELINE YOU'VE GOT THERE.
OH-HO-HO, DON'T THINK I DON'T KNOW IT, TOO. SHE'S THE BEST.
I THINK THEY'RE TALKING ABOUT ME...BUT I DON'T THINK I'M IN ANY TROUBLE. AT LEAST I HOPE NOT.

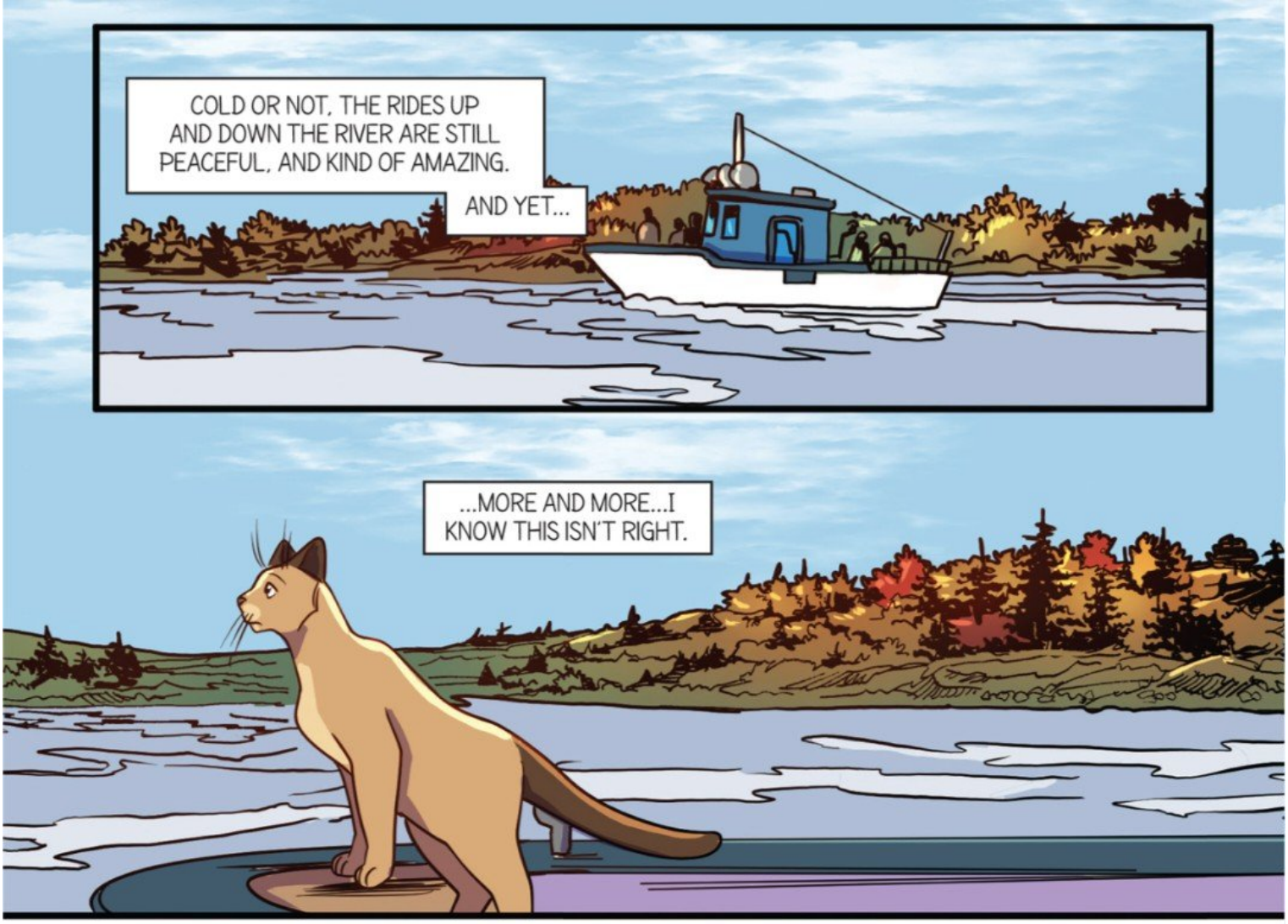

OKAY, BROWNIE, WE'D BEST GET OUT OF THE WAY NOW. THESE NICE PEOPLE ARE GOING TO HOSE OFF ALL THAT NASTY GASOLINE.
C'MON NOW, COME UPSTAIRS WITH ME. HERE...
...I'VE GOT SOME HAM FOR YOU. YOU LIKE THAT, DON'T YOU? YEAH?
HE WANTS ME TO FOLLOW HIM. I UNDERSTAND THAT. AND I KNOW I NEED TO MOVE AWAY FROM ALL THESE OTHER HOUSEFOLK.
BUT FOR THE FIRST TIME IN A LONG TIME, I DON'T JUST FEEL LOVED AND SAFE. I FEEL STRONG. AND UNAFRAID.
AND I WON'T BE SLEEPING LIKE A KITTYPET TONIGHT. IT'S TIME TO HUNT.
OKAY, BROWNIE, OKAY. I GET IT. YOU JUST STAY OUT OF TROUBLE, ALL RIGHT?
I'LL SEE YOU IN THE MORNING.

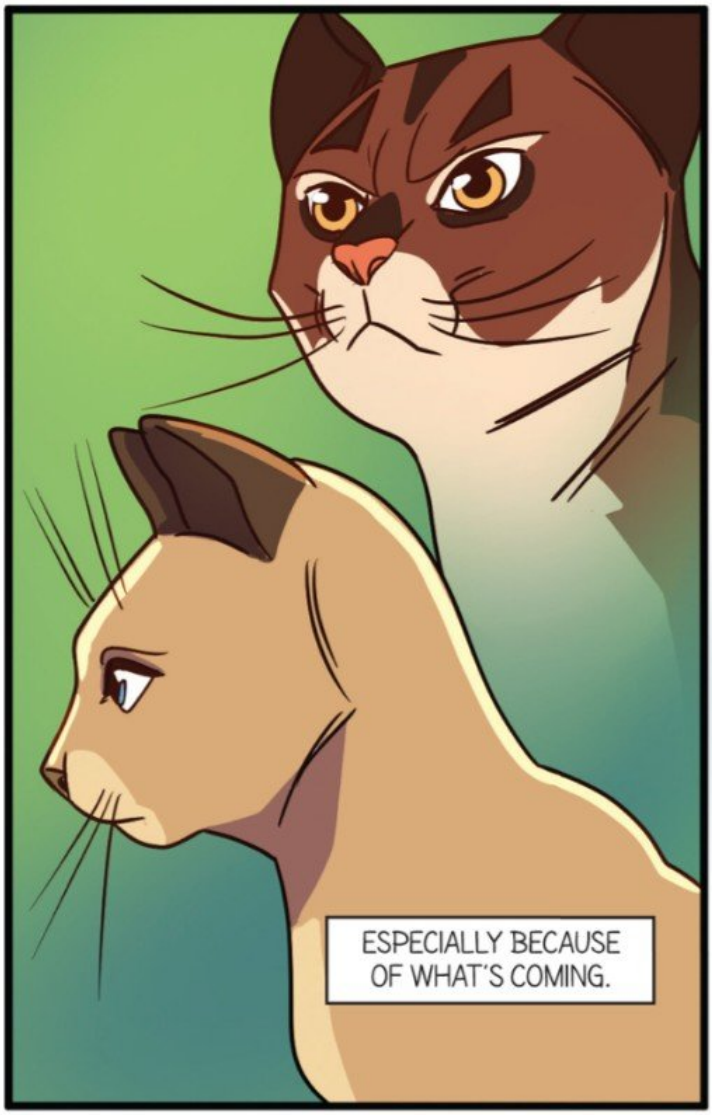
I DON'T KNOW WHO THE NEW HOUSEFOLK IS WHO SHOWS UP THE NEXT DAY, BUT THE CAPTAIN SEEMS AWFULLY PLEASED.
SO IT CAN'T BE A BAD THING, I GUESS.
THIS IS SUCH AN AMAZING STORY! BROWNIE, THE HERO CAT!
NEWS

YEAH...I KNEW SHE'D BRING ME LUCK!


WHATEVER IT WAS THAT NEW HOUSEFOLK DID...
HERO CAT SAVES BUSINESS

...THE CAPTAIN'S BUSIER THAN EVER NOW. HE RUNS HIS BOAT MORE THAN USUAL, EVEN THOUGH IT'S GETTING COLDER.


COLD OR NOT, THE RIDES UP AND DOWN THE RIVER ARE STILL PEACEFUL, AND KIND OF AMAZING.
AND YET...
...MORE AND MORE...I KNOW THIS ISN'T RIGHT.


ESPECIALLY BECAUSE OF WHAT'S COMING.

BUT EVEN AS TIGERSTAR HAUNTS MY THOUGHTS, I REALIZE THAT HE NO LONGER HAUNTS MY HEART.
I'M NOT AFRAID OF HIM ANYMORE. PLUS, HE WAS WRONG ABOUT ME. DEAD WRONG. I'M NOT NOTHING.
I'M SASHA.

HUH? WHAT'S THAT?
THERE'S SOMETHING IN THERE! I'VE GOT TO GET THE CAPTAIN!
MRREEEEOOOOOOWWWWRRR!!
SAINTS ABOVE, BROWNIE, WHAT'S THAT RACKET ABOUT? WHAT'S GOT YOU SO--
BOUNCIN' BARNACLES! SOMEBODY HAND ME THAT GAFF!

I ALREADY KNOW WHAT'S IN THE SACK. I THINK I KNEW THE MOMENT I SAW IT UNDER THE WATER.
I JUST DON'T KNOW IF IT'S TOO LATE OR NOT. I HOPE NOT. I HOPE NOT.
OOOH, THAT POOR LITTLE KITTY! IS IT ALIVE?
I THINK SO. BUT JUST BARELY.

HERE, MOVE BACK. GIVE 'EM SOME ROOM! IF ANYBODY'S GONNA KNOW WHAT TO DO WITH THIS LITTLE GUY...
...IT'LL BE BROWNIE.
GO ON, GIRL! YOU CAN DO IT! I KNOW YOU CAN!
I'VE NEVER DONE THIS BEFORE. I DON'T KNOW WHAT TO DO.
BUT AS SOON AS I GET CLOSE TO THIS POOR LITTLE HALF-DROWNED SCRAP...

I FIND THAT I DO KNOW WHAT TO DO. IT JUST COMES NATURALLY. AND CONSIDERING WHAT THE NEAR FUTURE HOLDS FOR ME...
...I'M MORE RELIEVED THAN I CAN SAY.
WH...WHERE AM I?
YOU'RE ON A BOAT. DON'T WORRY, LITTLE ONE.
YOU'RE SAFE NOW.

THERE, THERE... YOU JUST RELAX... I'LL TAKE GOOD CARE OF YOU.
WHO'D'A EVER THOUGHT I'D TURN OUT TO BE A CAT PERSON?

THE CAPTAIN AND THE LITTLE ONE HAVE ALREADY BONDED. THAT'S PLAIN TO SEE.
IT MAKES ME HAPPY. I WOULDN'T HAVE WANTED TO TRY TO CARE FOR HIM ALL BY MYSELF.

GALLEY
HERE WE ARE, CHILDREN.
HOME SWEET HOME.

I THINK I'LL CALL HIM "PATCH." WHAT DO YOU THINK, BROWNIE?
IS PATCH A GOOD NAME?
THE CAPTAIN KEEPS MAKING A NEW SOUND. PATCH? IS THAT WHAT HE'S CALLING THE LITTLE ONE?
IF IT IS...I LIKE IT.
PATCH.
WOW...THIS PLACE IS AWESOME!
HE'S SO CUTE...AND THE CAPTAIN OBVIOUSLY PLANS TO KEEP HIM. IT'S RIGHT THEN THAT I REALIZE...
...PATCH'S ARRIVAL IS ANOTHER SIGNAL THAT THINGS ARE ABOUT TO CHANGE.

AT LEAST WHEN I HAVE TO LEAVE, THE CAPTAIN WON'T BE ALONE.

THE TINY LIVES INSIDE ME...PATCH'S ARRIVAL...

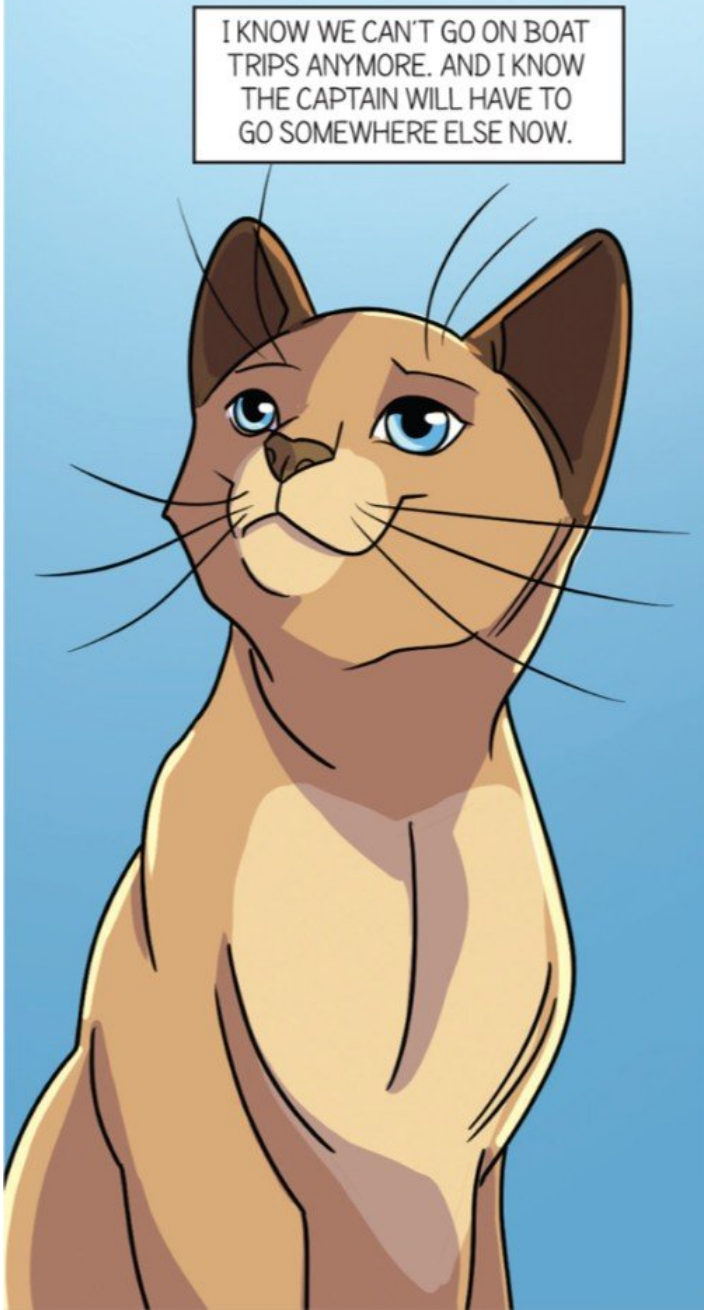
...THEY WERE LEADING UP TO ONE LAST BIG CHANGE...

...A CHANGE THAT ARRIVES ONE COLD, COLD MORNING.

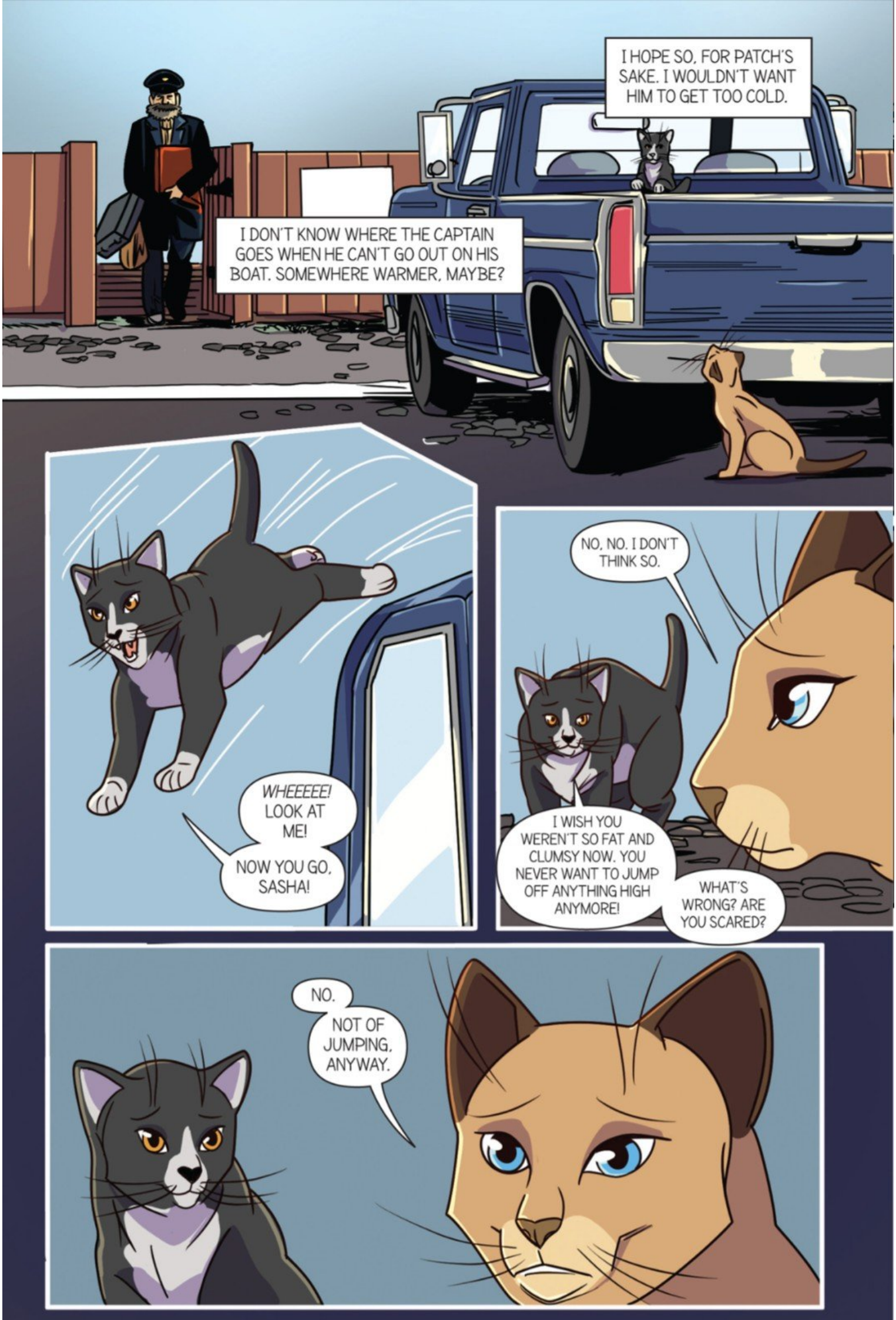
SASHA!
THE RIVER'S SOLID!

I'VE ONLY HEARD ABOUT THIS. I'VE NEVER SEEN IT. IT'S A LITTLE HARD TO BELIEVE, UNTIL I DO SEE IT.
BUT THERE IT IS. THE WHOLE RIVER HAS FROZEN OVER.
WAAA-HAAAA!
IT'S NOT SOLID, THOUGH. THERE'S STILL FRIGID WATER UNDERNEATH. I CAN SMELL IT...
AND I CAN HEAR THE CREAKING AS WEIGHT SHIFTS ON IT.
PATCH!
"PATCH, IT'S NOT SAFE OUT THERE! COME BACK TO THE SHORE!"
O-OKAY, SASHA...I'M COMING...

WELL, CHILDREN... THAT'S THAT. WINTER'S UPON US.
TIME TO CLOSE UP SHOP 'TIL THE SPRING THAW.


I KNOW WE CAN'T GO ON BOAT TRIPS ANYMORE. AND I KNOW THE CAPTAIN WILL HAVE TO GO SOMEWHERE ELSE NOW.

AND EVEN THOUGH I KNEW THIS WAS COMING, IT'S HERE FASTER THAN I'D HOPED.


I HOPE SO, FOR PATCH'S SAKE. I WOULDN'T WANT HIM TO GET TOO COLD.
I DON'T KNOW WHERE THE CAPTAIN GOES WHEN HE CAN'T GO OUT ON HIS BOAT. SOMEWHERE WARMER, MAYBE?
WHEEEEE! LOOK AT ME!
NOW YOU GO, SASHA!
NO, NO. I DON'T THINK SO.
I WISH YOU WEREN'T SO FAT AND CLUMSY NOW. YOU NEVER WANT TO JUMP OFF ANYTHING HIGH ANYMORE!
WHAT'S WRONG? ARE YOU SCARED?
NO.
NOT OF JUMPING, ANYWAY.

BROWNIE! PATCH!
TIME TO GO!
WHERE ARE WE GOING, ANYWAY?
I DON'T KNOW. BUT IT WILL BE AN EXCITING NEW ADVENTURE, WHATEVER HAPPENS.
I CAN'T WAIT! I BET THERE'LL BE A LOT OF STUFF TO CLIMB!
WELL, COME ON, SASHA!
YOU'RE NOT AFRAID TO JUMP UP, ARE YOU?
PATCH...I'M NOT GOING.

WHAT?
WHAT'RE YOU TALKING ABOUT?
EVERYTHING WILL BE FINE, I PROMISE YOU. YOU'LL HAVE THE CAPTAIN TO LOOK AFTER YOU...
AND YOU NEED TO LOOK AFTER HIM, TOO.
YOU REALLY MEAN IT? YOU'RE NOT COMING WITH US?
I CAN'T. I'M SORRY, LITTLE ONE.

BROWNIE?
AREN'T YOU JOINING US?

WELL...I ALWAYS KNEW YOU WERE A WANDERER, GIRL.
YOU TAKE CARE OF YOURSELF, ALL RIGHT?
HE UNDERSTANDS. I CAN TELL.
THIS IS THE RIGHT DECISION. I KNOW IT.
I JUST WISH IT DIDN'T HURT SO MUCH.

SNOW.
SOMETHING ELSE I'VE NEVER SEEN BEFORE.

I'VE BEEN HAPPY WITH THE CAPTAIN AND PATCH...BUT MY KITS WILL BE BORN SOON.
AND I WANT TO RAISE THEM IN THE WOODS. WITH TREES AND PREY AND FREEDOM.

THE CAPTAIN IS GOOD AND SWEET... BUT HE MIGHT NOT BE AROUND FOREVER. LIKE KEN AND JEAN.
I CAN'T RELY ON HOUSEFOLK. OR ON OTHER CATS. I HAVE TO BE ABLE TO SURVIVE ON MY OWN.

I JUST HOPE MY KITS WILL UNDERSTAND.

#3: RETURN TO THE CLANS

FOR A LITTLE WHILE...JUST A FEW MOMENTS, REALLY...LIFE SEEMS PERFECT.
I WISH IT COULD STAY THAT WAY.
BUT MY LITTLE ONES NEED A LOT OF MILK. AND IF I'M GOING TO PROVIDE IT FOR THEM, I HAVE TO BE STRONG.
WHICH MEANS I HAVE TO HUNT. EVERY DAY.
AND PREY IS GETTING SCARCER AND SCARCER.

THESE KITS ARE MY WHOLE LIFE NOW. BUT...HAVE I DONE THE RIGHT THING? I'M SO COLD, AND TIRED...
AM I JUST BEING SELFISH, WANTING TO RAISE THEM IN THE WOODS?
I'VE NAMED THEM WELL, I THINK.
HAWK...
...HIS SISTER MOTH...
...AND THE OLDEST, TADPOLE.
AS SOON AS THEY'RE OLD ENOUGH, I'M TAKING THEM AS FAR FROM SHADOWCLAN'S BORDERS AS POSSIBLE.
TIGERSTAR WILL NEVER SEE THEM. HE WON'T BE A PART OF THEIR LIVES AT ALL. I'LL MAKE SURE OF THAT.

BUT I STILL WISH THEY COULD SEE HOW STRONG THEIR FATHER IS...HOW COMMANDING...

...HOW WONDERFUL HE CAN BE.
I WON'T SEE HIM, NOT EVER AGAIN, NOT WHEN I'M AWAKE. BUT, MORE NIGHTS THAN NOT...

...I SEE HIM IN MY DREAMS.

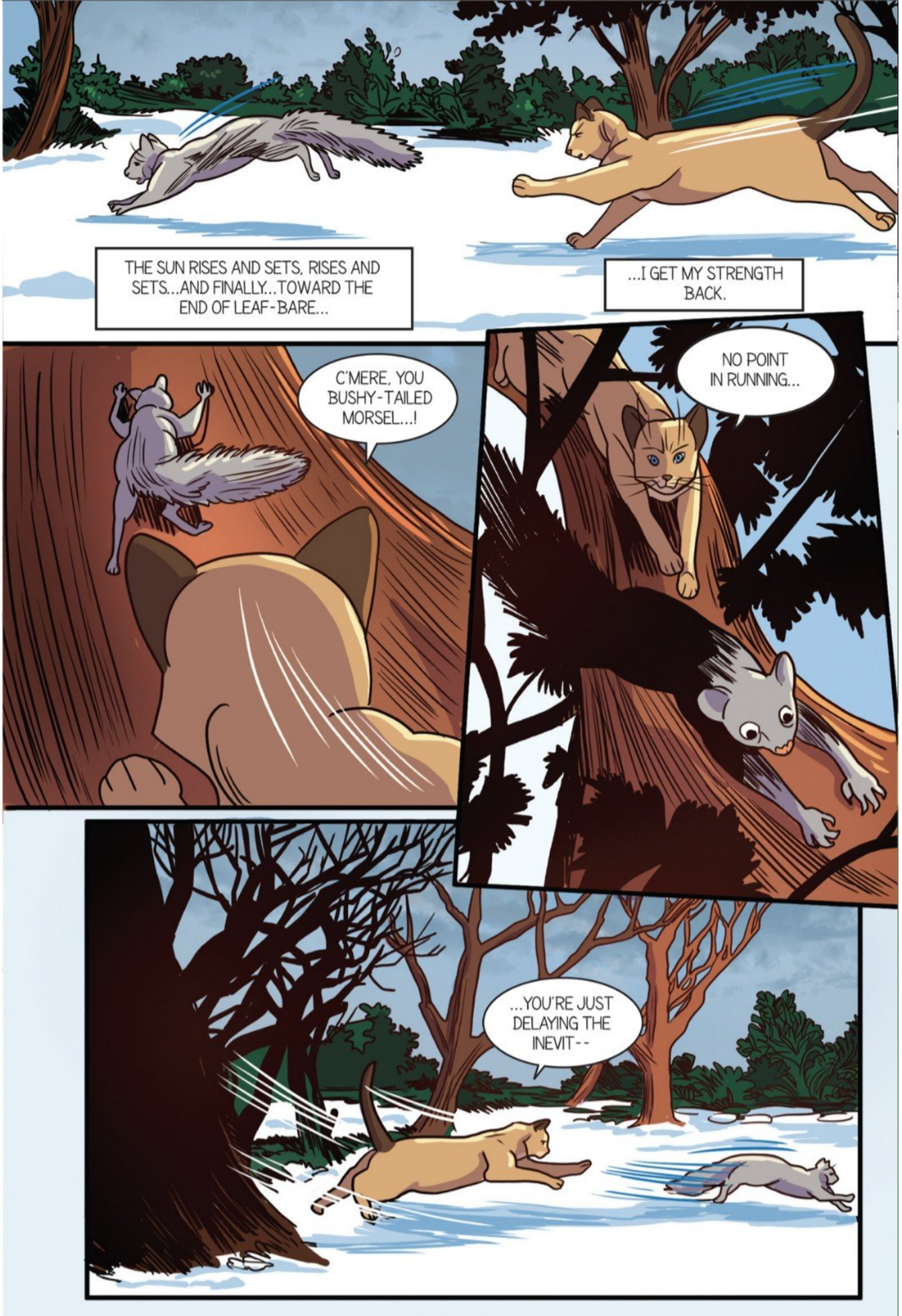
EVEN THERE, I CAN'T BEAR TO TALK TO HIM. NOT AFTER WHAT I LEARNED ABOUT HIM, ABOUT O HIS TRUE NATURE.
I KNOW IT'S ONLY A DREAM. ...BUT IT STILL HURTS.

THE KITS STAY IN THE DEN, OF COURSE, WHILE I HUNT. AND AS SCRAWNY AND WEAK AS I'VE GOTTEN...

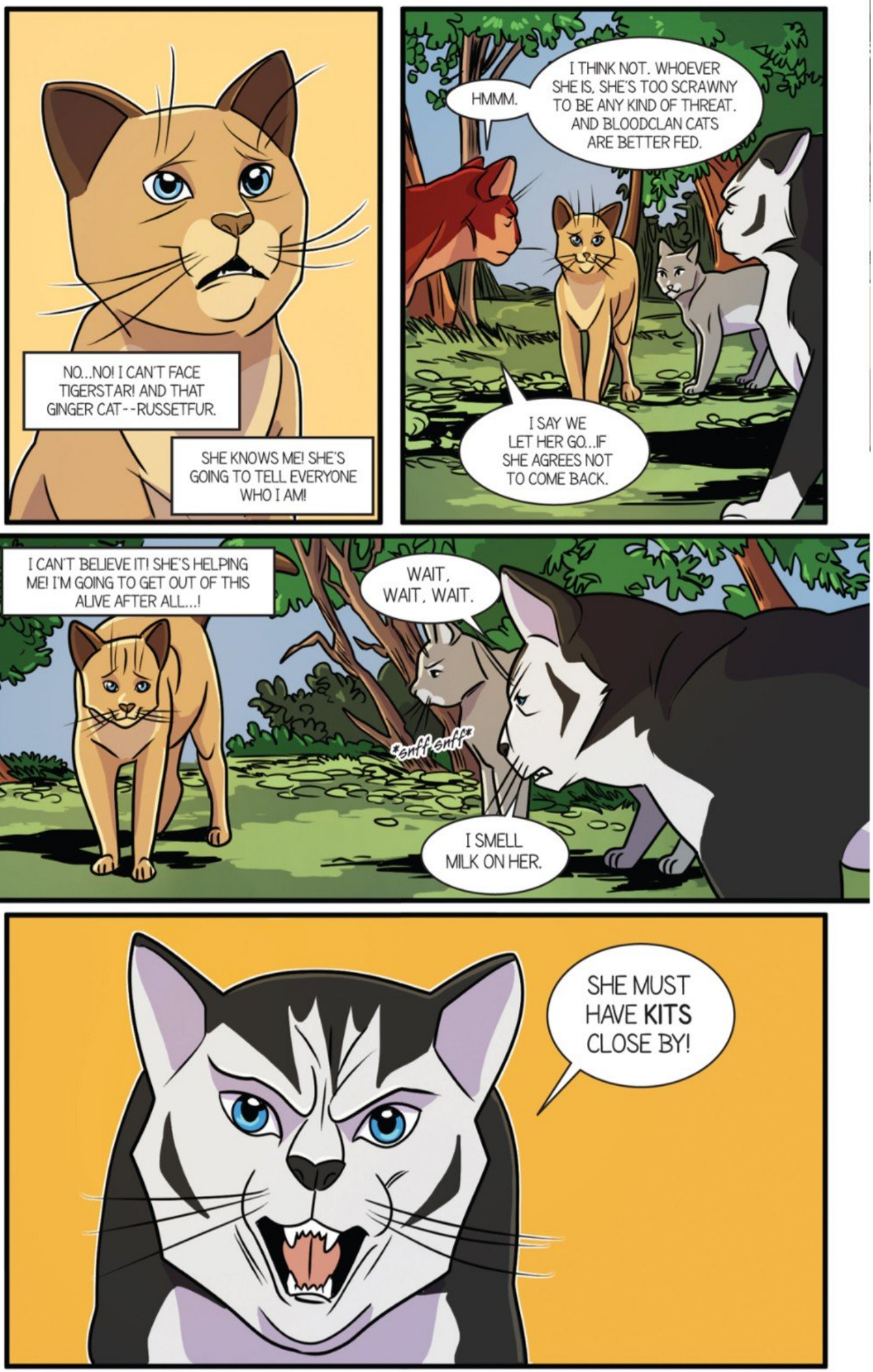
...MOST DAYS IT'S A RELIEF THAT THEY CAN'T SEE ME. I'D BE SO EMBARRASSED.

I NEVER GIVE UP, THOUGH. NEVER EVEN CONSIDER IT. AND IF WHAT I FINALLY BRING HOME IS A PITIFUL LITTLE MOUSE...

...WELL, THAT'S JUST FINE.


THE SUN RISES AND SETS, RISES AND SETS...AND FINALLY...TOWARD THE END OF LEAF-BARE...
...I GET MY STRENGTH BACK.
C'MERE, YOU BUSHY-TAILED MORSEL...!
NO POINT IN RUNNING...
...YOU'RE JUST DELAYING THE INEVIT--

--ABLE.
OH NO. OH NO NO NO, I'M IN SHADOWCLAN TERRITORY! I DIDN'T REALIZE I'D CROSSED THE BORDER!
I THINK THIS MUST BE THE WORST BLOODCLAN SPY I'VE EVER SEEN. JUST THREW HERSELF RIGHT INTO OUR PAWS.
SEND HER BACK TO BLOODCLAN IN LITTLE PIECES.
LET'S MAKE AN EXAMPLE OF HER.
NO.
OUR LEADER SHOULD BE THE ONE TO DECIDE WHAT TO DO WITH SPIES. DON'T YOU AGREE, RUSSETFUR?
HISSSS


NO...NO! I CAN'T FACE TIGERSTAR! AND THAT GINGER CAT--RUSSETFUR.
SHE KNOWS ME! SHE'S GOING TO TELL EVERYONE WHO I AM!
HMMM.
I THINK NOT. WHOEVER SHE IS, SHE'S TOO SCRAWNY TO BE ANY KIND OF THREAT. AND BLOODCLAN CATS ARE BETTER FED.
I SAY WE LET HER GO...IF SHE AGREES NOT TO COME BACK.
I CAN'T BELIEVE IT! SHE'S HELPING ME! I'M GOING TO GET OUT OF THIS ALIVE AFTER ALL...!
WAIT, WAIT, WAIT.
sniff sniff
I SMELL MILK ON HER.
SHE MUST HAVE KITS CLOSE BY!

OH, PLEASE, NO, DON'T...IF THEY FIND MY KITS, THEY'LL STEAL THEM, AND FORCE THEM TO BE SHADOWCLAN WARRIORS!
ESPECIALLY IF TIGERSTAR FINDS OUT THEY'RE HIS...!
I...I DID. I DID HAVE KITS.
THE COLD WAS...TOO MUCH FOR THEM.
THEY ALL DIED.
HOW HORRIBLE...!
YOU POOR THING. LISTEN...YOU CAN GO BACK WHERE YOU CAME FROM.
GO ON, NOW.

I CAN BARELY BREATHE, MY HEART'S BEATING SO FAST, BUT I TRY NOT TO LET IT SHOW.
AT LEAST NOT SO THE KITS CAN SEE.
MY CLOSE CALL MAKES ME FEEL A BIT GENEROUS. I DECIDE TO LET MY KITTENS COME OUT AND PLAY...
...A TREAT THEY DON'T GET OFTEN ENOUGH.
WE'RE FINALLY OUT OF THE DEN! COME ON, COME ON!
ARE YOU SURE IT'S SAFE, TADPOLE? WHAT ABOUT...
...WHAT ABOUT FOXES?
DON'T WORRY, MOTH! I WON'T LET ANY STUPID FOXES HURT YOU!
OKAY! I'LL FOLLOW YOU! ...UH, WHERE ARE WE GOING?

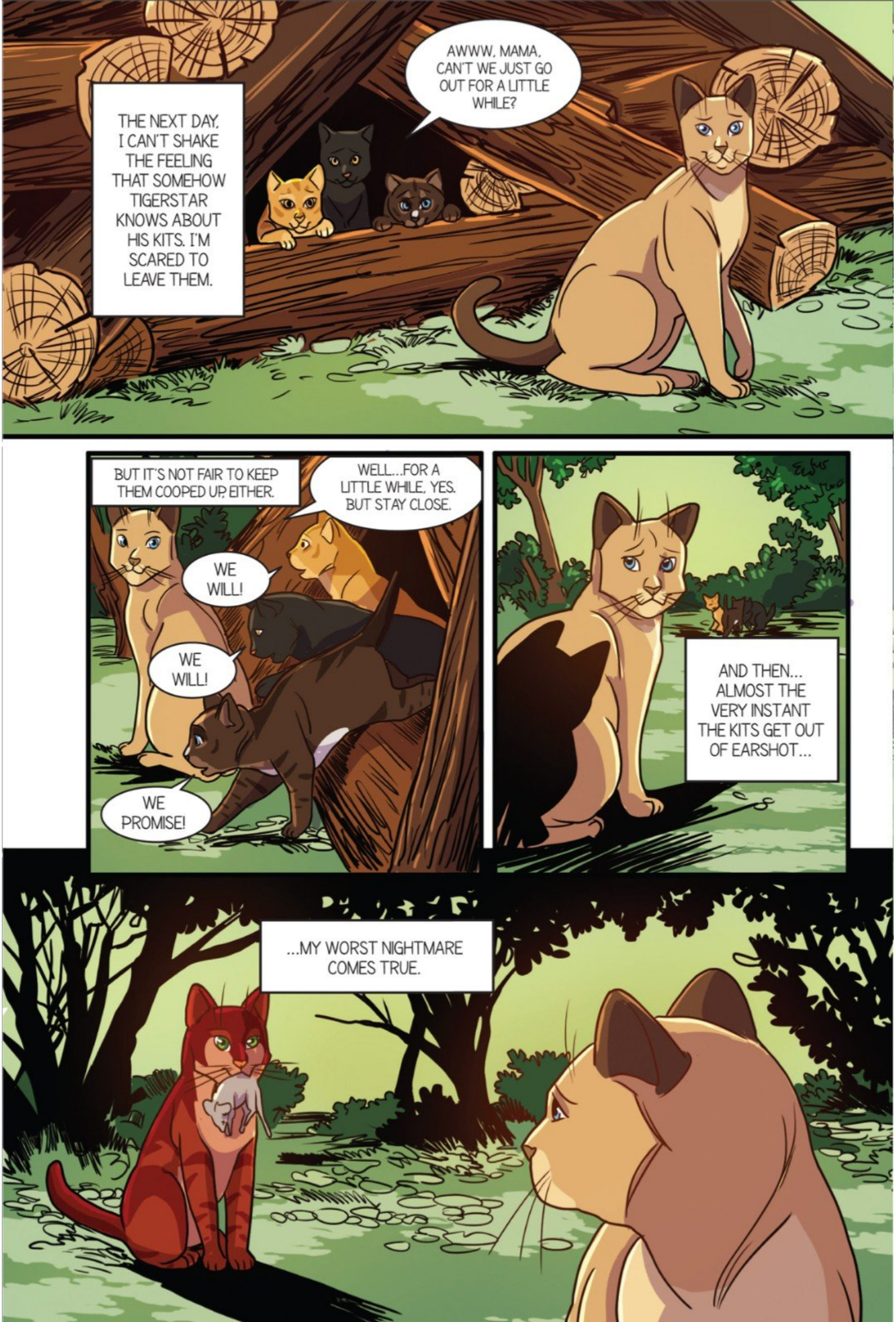
C'MON, FOLLOW ME!
RIGHT BEHIND YOU! I-- *RRAOW!*
OH! HAWK, ARE YOU ALL RIGHT?
THMP
YEAH, I'M OKAY. I JUST CAN'T CLIMB LIKE TADPOLE CAN! NOT YET, ANYWAY.
COME ON, LITTLE BROTHER! YOU CAN DO IT!
JUST TRY AGAIN!

OOOOH--LOOK AT THAT BUSH OVER THERE!
LET'S GO SEE IF WE CAN CLIMB IT!
HEY...DID YOU HEAR SOMETHING? SOUNDED LIKE SOMETHING MOVING... IN THE WOODS...
...AND COMING CLOSER!
EVERYTHING'S FINE! DON'T BE SCARED.
WELL, THERE'S NO TIME TO RUN NOW. WE'LL JUST HAVE TO FACE IT!
IT IS COMING CLOSER! IT'S COMING STRAIGHT AT US!
LOOK OUT!
MRRAAOOWRR!

FLAP
FLAP
FLAP
FLAP
WOW...
TADPOLE! HAWK! MOTH!
TIME TO COME IN!
YOU SHOULD'VE SEEN IT, MAMA! IT WAS HUGE!
IT WAS GIANT-SIZE HUGE! AND WE WEREN'T SCARED AT ALL!
NOT AT ALL! WE COULD'VE CAUGHT IT, EASY.
YEAH! IT JUST, UH, SURPRISED US.

THEY REALLY ENJOYED THEMSELVES TODAY. BUT NOW I WORRY.
WHAT IF THEIR SCENT DRIFTED ALL THE WAY TO SHADOWCLAN? WHAT WOULD I DO THEN?
TELL US A STORY, MAMA! PLEASE?
DO YOU WANT TO HEAR ABOUT THE FIRST TIME I CAME TO THE FOREST?
YEAH! YEAH!
ALL RIGHT...WELL... I WAS SIX MOONS OLD, AND I SNUCK AWAY FROM MY HOUSEFOLK DURING GREENLEAF.
I WALKED ALL THE WAY TO THE EDGE OF THE WOODS, AND I SAW MY FIRST RABBIT...
...BUT THEN I GOT CHASED BY A FOX. I THINK NOW IT WAS JUST A CUB, BUT I WAS VERY SMALL, AND THE FOX WAS SCARY!
I ENDED UP HIDING DOWN A HOLE... BUT THEN KEN, ONE OF MY HOUSEFOLK, CAME LOOKING FOR ME.
HE FOUND ME WITH HIS WALKING-STICK AND HE CARRIED ME SAFELY BACK HOME.
179

WHAT HAPPENED TO KEN?
I DON'T KNOW.
ONE DAY HE WAS THERE. THE NEXT DAY HE WAS GONE.
AND I NEVER FOUND OUT WHERE HE WENT.
OR WHY.
DON'T BE SAD, MAMA.
I CAN'T LET MYSELF THINK ABOUT KEN TOO MUCH. I HAVE MY OWN KITS TO LOOK AFTER NOW.
AND THEY NEED ME JUST AS MUCH AS I NEEDED KEN AND JEAN. MAYBE EVEN MORE.
I'LL TAKE GOOD CARE OF THEM. NO MATTER WHAT. THEY'RE ALL I HAVE.
AND TIGERSTAR WILL NEVER GET HIS PAWS ON THEM. NO MATTER HOW OFTEN HE INVADES MY DREAMS.


THE NEXT DAY, I CAN'T SHAKE THE FEELING THAT SOMEHOW TIGERSTAR KNOWS ABOUT HIS KITS. I'M SCARED TO LEAVE THEM.
AWWW, MAMA, CAN'T WE JUST GO OUT FOR A LITTLE WHILE?
BUT IT'S NOT FAIR TO KEEP THEM COOPED UP, EITHER.
WELL...FOR A LITTLE WHILE, YES. BUT STAY CLOSE.
WE WILL!
WE WILL!
WE PROMISE!
AND THEN... ALMOST THE VERY INSTANT THE KITS GET OUT OF EARSHOT...
...MY WORST NIGHTMARE COMES TRUE.

A SHADOWCLAN CAT! RIGHT HERE IN BROAD DAYLIGHT, WATCHING MY KITS!
I DON'T KNOW WHETHER TO RUN OR FIGHT OR JUST SCREAM.
WELL.
ARE THEY TIGERSTAR'S?
MY HEART ALMOST STOPS.
Y-YES.
I THOUGHT SO.
THE TOMS LOOK LIKE HIM.
PLEASE, RUSSETFUR, PLEASE DON'T TELL TIGERSTAR ABOUT THEM!
DON'T TELL--YOU MEAN, YOU DON'T KNOW? OH, SASHA... TIGERSTAR IS DEAD.
KILLED IN BATTLE WITH BLOODCLAN, BY THAT TWOLEGPLACE CAT HE MADE THE DEAL WITH IN THE FIRST PLACE.
HE DIED, AND THEN THE CLAN CATS DROVE BLOODCLAN OUT OF THE FOREST.

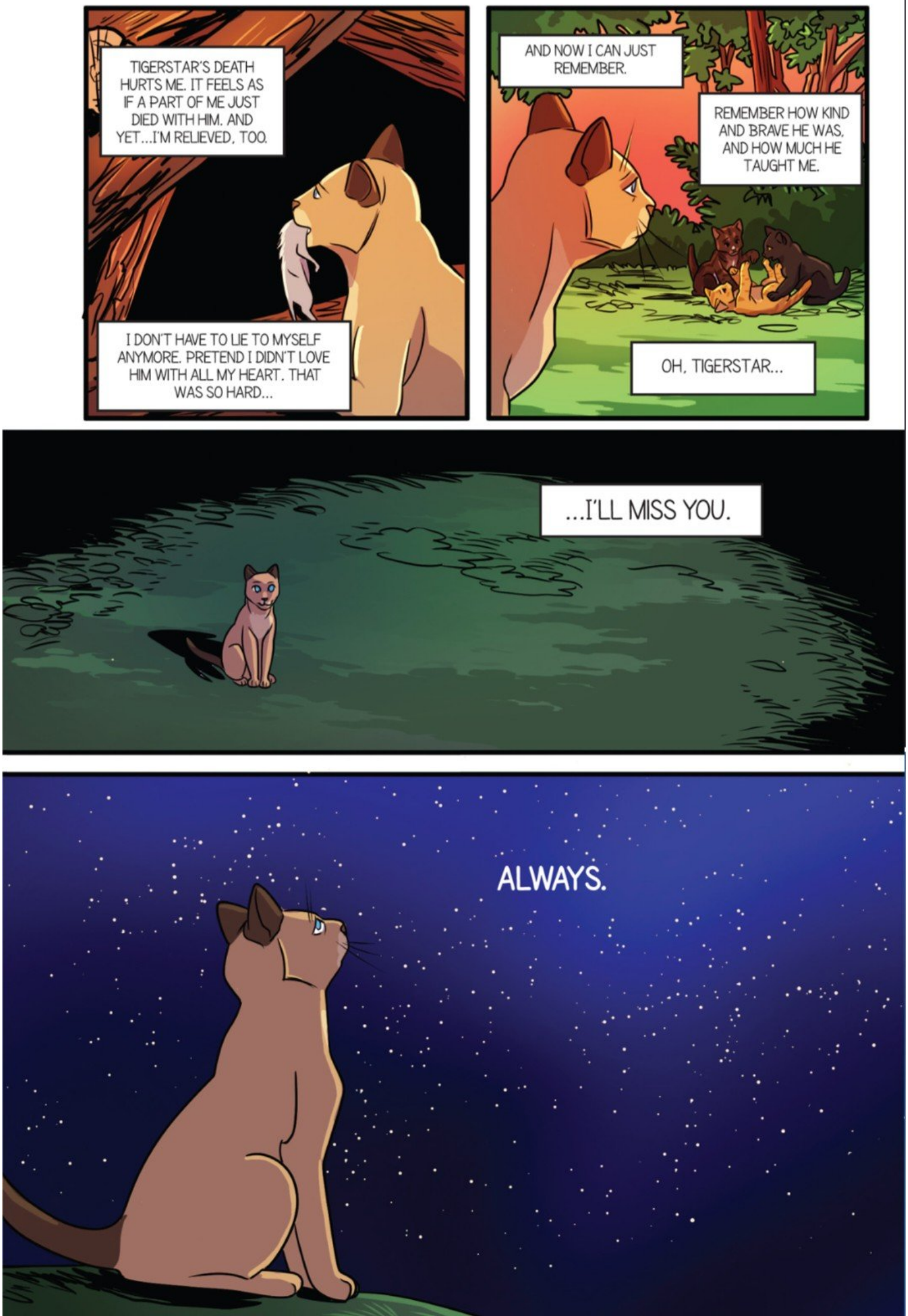
HE'S... DEAD...?
WELL.
AT LEAST NOW THE FOREST HAS A CHANCE OF PEACE.
ANYWAY...HERE.
TAKE THIS.
I WOULDN'T STAY AROUND, IF I WERE YOU.
ANY OTHER SHADOWCLAN CAT WHO FINDS OUT THESE KITS ARE TIGERSTAR'S... THEY'LL WANT THE KITS AS WARRIORS.

DON'T WORRY.
AS SOON AS THEY'RE STRONG ENOUGH TO TRAVEL, WE'RE ALL LEAVING THIS PART OF THE FOREST FOR GOOD.

ALL RIGHT.
I SHOULD GO.

YOU HAVE A LOVELY FAMILY, SASHA.
I HOPE THEY GROW UP STRONG AND HEALTHY.

I'M SADDER THAN I EXPECTED TO BE, WATCHING RUSSETFUR WALK AWAY. I WISH WE COULD'VE KNOWN EACH OTHER...
...IN BETTER TIMES.


TIGERSTAR'S DEATH HURTS ME. IT FEELS AS IF A PART OF ME JUST DIED WITH HIM. AND YET...I'M RELIEVED, TOO.
I DON'T HAVE TO LIE TO MYSELF ANYMORE. PRETEND I DIDN'T LOVE HIM WITH ALL MY HEART. THAT WAS SO HARD...
AND NOW I CAN JUST REMEMBER.
REMEMBER HOW KIND AND BRAVE HE WAS, AND HOW MUCH HE TAUGHT ME.
OH, TIGERSTAR...
...I'LL MISS YOU.
ALWAYS.

THAT NIGHT, WHEN I FINALLY SLEEP, I TRY TO SPEAK TO TIGERSTAR IN MY DREAM...
...BUT HE LEAVES ME.
I DON'T KNOW WHAT IT MEANS.
...I WISH HE'D STAY.

THE KITS DON'T KNOW ANYTHING ABOUT THEIR FATHER, OF COURSE.

I THINK ABOUT TELLING THEM. CONSTANTLY I THINK ABOUT IT.

BUT THE TIME NEVER SEEMS RIGHT.

INSTEAD I CONTENT MYSELF WITH WATCHING THEM GROW.
THEY'RE SO PERFECT.

I TRY MY BEST NOT TO LET THEM KNOW HOW HARD THINGS ARE RIGHT NOW.

FOOD IS SCARCE DURING LEAF-BARE, AND HALF THE TIME WHEN I FINALLY FIND SOME, I HAVE TO FIGHT FOR IT.

SEEMS AS IF I HAVE TO GO FARTHER AND FARTHER AWAY FROM THE DEN EACH TIME I GO HUNTING, TOO.

IT CAN'T BE HELPED, THOUGH. I HAVE TO KEEP AS MUCH DISTANCE AS POSSIBLE BETWEEN ME AND SHADOWCLAN...
...AND THAT PUTS A HUGE SECTION OF THE FOREST OFF-LIMITS.

AT LEAST I KNOW I HAVE A WARM DEN TO COME HOME TO, AND THREE PRECIOUS LITTLE--
--MY OLD COLLAR? NO ONE'S SUPPOSED TO SEE THIS--I CAN'T LET ANYONE KNOW I USED TO BE A KITTYPET.
THE KITS KNOW BETTER THAN TO TAKE IT OUT OF THE DEN...THOUGH I HAVE TO WONDER, *WHY BOTHER*?
I'VE TOLD YOU ALL BEFORE. DON'T TAKE THIS OUT OF THE DEN.
WE'RE SORRY...WE DIDN'T MEAN TO--
THAT'S FINE. IT'S FINE. JUST...DON'T DO IT ANYMORE.
ALL RIGHT?
EVEN WITH MY KITS HERE...SOMETIMES I FEEL SO ALONE...SO OLD AND HELPLESS.
I WANT TIGERSTAR BACK. I WANT KEN BACK.
BUT THE BEST I CAN HOPE FOR IS JUST TO MAKE IT THROUGH EACH DAY.

WOW...MAMA LOOKED SO SAD LAST NIGHT. I'VE NEVER SEEN HER LIKE THAT.
NEITHER HAVE I. I DON'T WANT HER TO BE SAD.
SPECIALLY NOT BECAUSE OF US.
I DON'T THINK MAMA WAS SAD BECAUSE OF US. I JUST THINK SHE FEELS BAD...
...'CAUSE SHE HATES LIVING IN THE WOODS, AND SHE MISSES HER OLD HOUSEFOLK FROM WHEN SHE LIVED IN TWOLEGPLACE.
WE'VE GOTTA DO SOMETHING.
BUT WHAT? WHAT COULD WE DO?
I KNOW! NEXT TIME SHE GOES OUT TO HUNT...
...WE COULD GO AND FIND KEN!

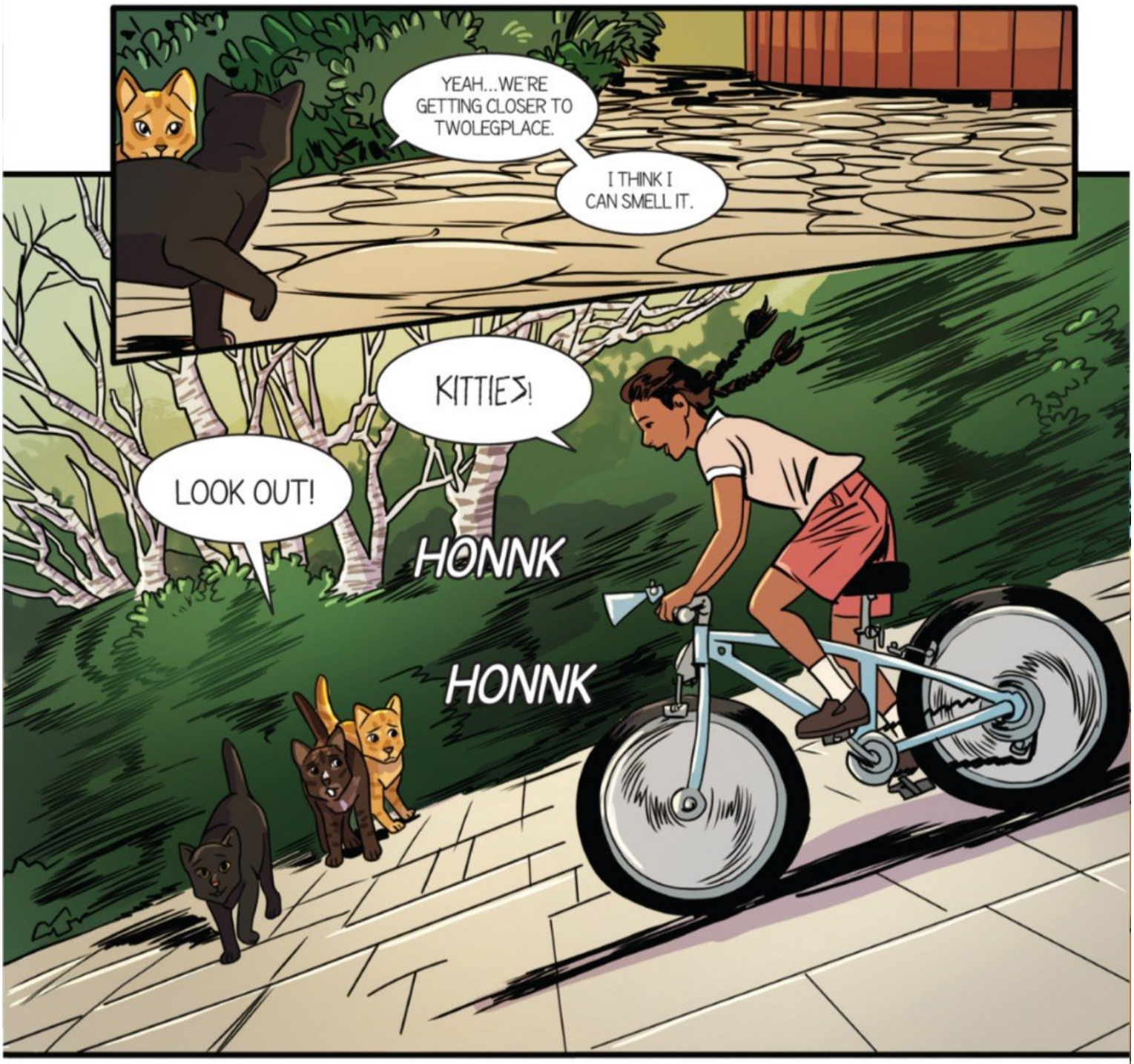
OKAY...SHE'S GOING...
SHE JUST LOOKED BACK,
LIKE SHE ALWAYS DOES...
ANNND...
...SHE'S IN THE TREES!
LET'S GO!

YEAH?
TADPOLE?
I'VE NEVER BEEN THIS FAR INTO THE WOODS BEFORE.
JUST STAY CLOSE TO ME. I'LL PROTECT YOU.

YOU... YOU KNOW WHAT'S MAKING THAT NOISE OVER THERE, RIGHT?
BUT IT SOUNDS LIKE IT COULD BE BIG...
I'M SURE IT'S NOTHING, MOTH.
JUST KEEP MOVING! BOTH OF YOU! WE'LL GO AROUND IT.

LOOK AT THAT DOG! IT'S HUGE!
IT COULD EAT US ALL IN ONE BITE!
GO! GO! KEEP GOING!

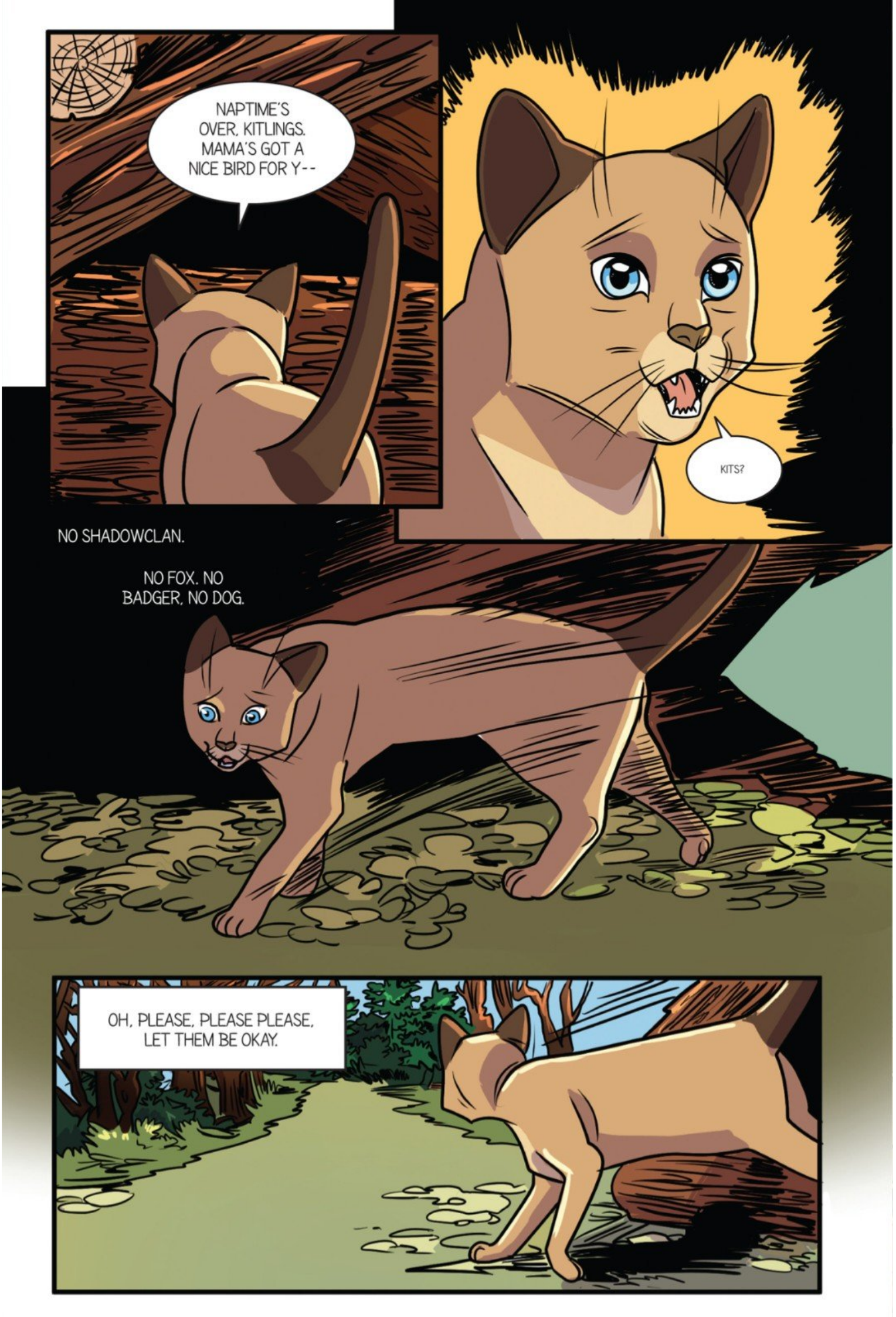
THESE... BRAMBLES... ARE AWFULLY SHARP...
ARE YOU SURE THIS IS THE RIGHT WAY, TADPOLE?


YEAH...WE'RE GETTING CLOSER TO TWOLEGPLACE.
I THINK I CAN SMELL IT.
KITTIES!
LOOK OUT!
HONNK
HONNK

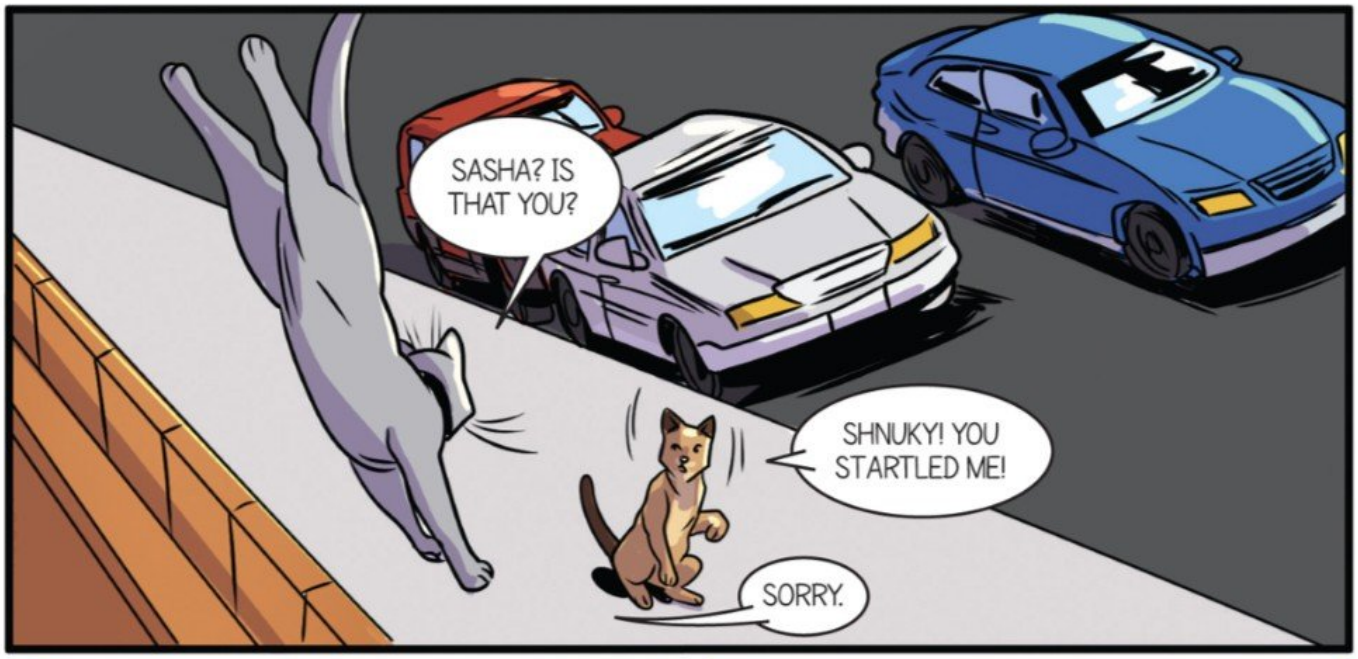
RUN! RUN!
BEFORE THAT THING COMES BACK!

YOU WERE RIGHT, TADPOLE...
...IT'S TWOLEGPLACE!
IT'S JUST LIKE MAMA SAID IT WAS! LOOK AT ALL THOSE TWOLEG DENS...I--
RRAAOWRR!
WHAT'RE THOSE THINGS??

THEY'RE CALLED "CARS." BUT DON'T WORRY. THEY STAY ON THOSE BIG PATHS. MOST OF THE TIME, ANYWAY.
LISTEN, YOU LOOK A LITTLE LOST. WHY DON'T YOU COME OVER HERE, WHERE IT'S SAFE? THERE'S PLENTY OF ROOM IN MY YARD.
HE SEEMS NICE. MAYBE HE KNOWS WHERE KEN IS!
WAIT, WAIT, HOLD ON! DIDN'T MAMA TELL US NEVER EVER EVER TALK TO STRANGERS?
WHAT'S A YARD? LET'S GO SEE!
WELL... YEAH...
THANKS, BUT WE KNOW EXACTLY WHERE WE'RE GOING.
RIGHT. SO WE DON'T NEED YOUR YARD.
"WE HAVE IMPORTANT PLACES TO GO."


NAPTIME'S OVER, KITLINGS. MAMA'S GOT A NICE BIRD FOR Y--
KITS?
NO SHADOWCLAN.
NO FOX. NO BADGER, NO DOG.
OH, PLEASE, PLEASE PLEASE, LET THEM BE OKAY.

PLEASE.
PLEASE.


SASHA? IS THAT YOU?
SHINUKY! YOU STARTLED ME!
SORRY.

I DIDN'T THINK YOU WERE COMING BACK! WEREN'T YOU DONE WITH THIS PLACE?
I AM, BUT... IT'S MY KITS. THEY RAN OFF THIS MORNING. I'M ON THEIR TRAIL, AND IT LEADS HERE.

OOHH...ALL RIGHT, THAT MAKES A LITTLE MORE SENSE NOW. I DID SEE THREE KITS HERE EARLIER.
THEY SAID THEY HAD IMPORTANT PLACES TO GO, AND RAN OFF!

"IMPORTANT PLACES..." THEY'LL BE LUCKY IF THEY DON'T RUN IN FRONT OF A CAR...!
WOULD YOU, MAYBE, LIKE SOME HELP LOOKING FOR YOUR LITTLE ONES?

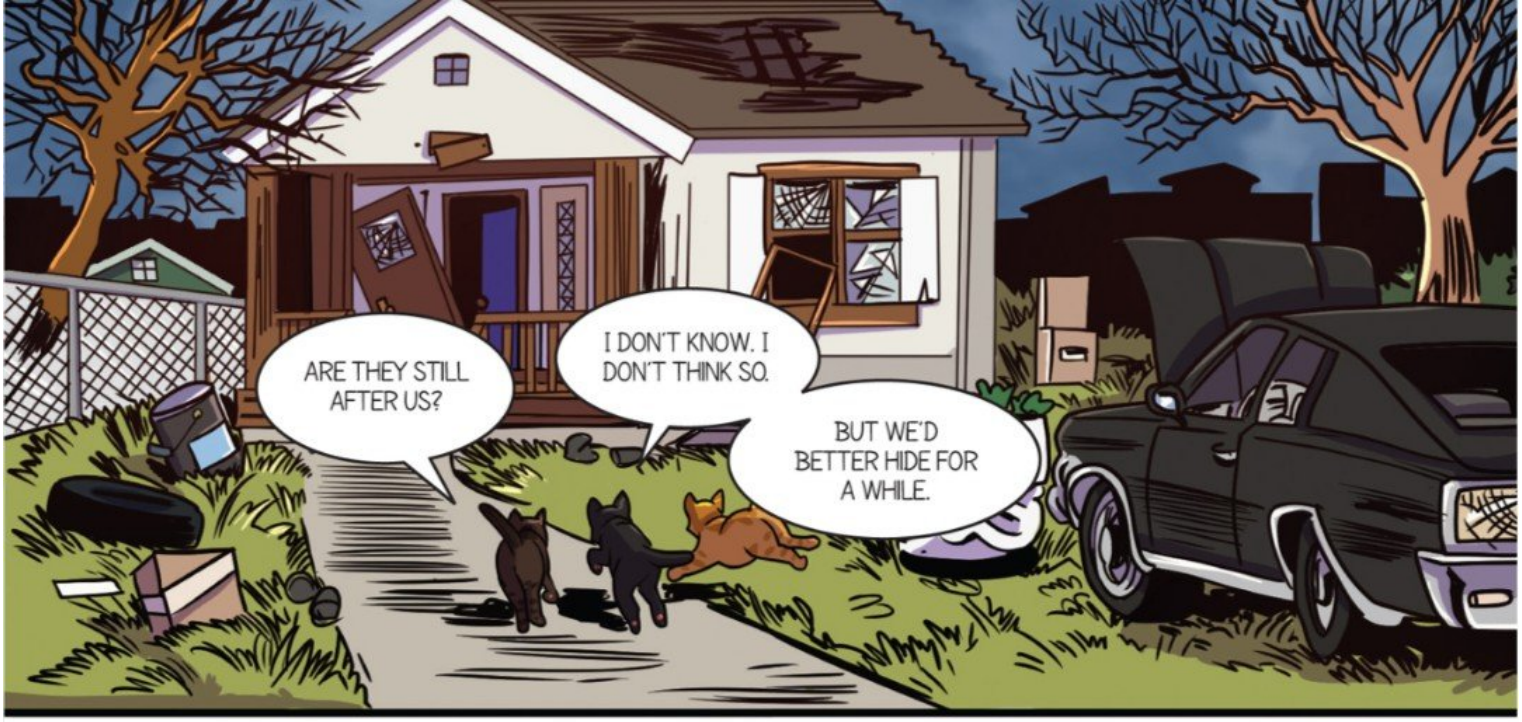
COME ON, YOU TWO. I THINK IT'S THIS WAY.
TADPOLE, THIS IS HOPELESS! WE DON'T EVEN KNOW WHICH OF THESE DENS HE LIVED IN!
CAN WE GO HOME SOON? I THINK IT'S GONNA RAIN.

LOOK, WE'VE ALL HEARD MAMA TALK ABOUT THE PLACE SHE USED TO LIVE. I'M SURE WE'LL KNOW IT WHEN WE--

WHERE DO YOU LITTLE SCRAPS THINK YOU'RE GOIN'?
--UH, WHEN WE SEE IT...
STRANGERS AREN'T WELCOME AROUND HERE!

AND...IS THAT... FOREST I SMELL ON YOU?
THREE LITTLE SCRAPS, STRAIGHT FROM THE WOODS...
YOU BETTER TELL ME WHAT YOU'RE DOING HERE, ALL THREE OF YOU. AND MAKE IT QUICK!

WELL, SIR, YOU SEE... WE, THAT IS, THE THREE OF US WERE...
LOOK AT THIS. LITTLE CAT SKINS, JUST WALKING AROUND LIKE THEY HAD GOOD SENSE.
GET AN EYEFUL OF THAT FUR.
THAT'D MAKE A NICE COLLAR, WOULDN'T IT?
...UM...
MMROOOWWR!
THEY WANNA MAKE US COLLARS!
MORE DOGS!
RUN! KEEP RUNNING! RUN!


ARE THEY STILL AFTER US?
I DON'T KNOW. I DON'T THINK SO.
BUT WE'D BETTER HIDE FOR A WHILE.

HEY, LOOK AT THAT!

I BET THEY WON'T THINK TO LOOK FOR US IN THERE! PLUS... WHAT'S THAT I SMELL?
OOH! TADPOLE! IS IT MOUSE? I SMELL MOUSE. IS IT MOUSE?
THIS IS PERFECT. SEE? WE HIDE FROM THOSE ROGUES, AND WE GET SOMETHING TO EAT AT THE SAME TIME!

COME ON!

SSHKK
THMP
WHAT IS THIS PLACE? WHAT'RE ALL THOSE THINGS?
IT'S ALL TWOLEG STUFF. IT'S GOTTA BE.
C'MON, WE CAN EXPLORE AND HUNT! IT'LL BE AN ADVENTURE!
SEE? THERE'S OUR DINNER! GET IT!
WAIT FOR ME, TADPOLE! I'M COMING TOO!

"TADPOLE?"

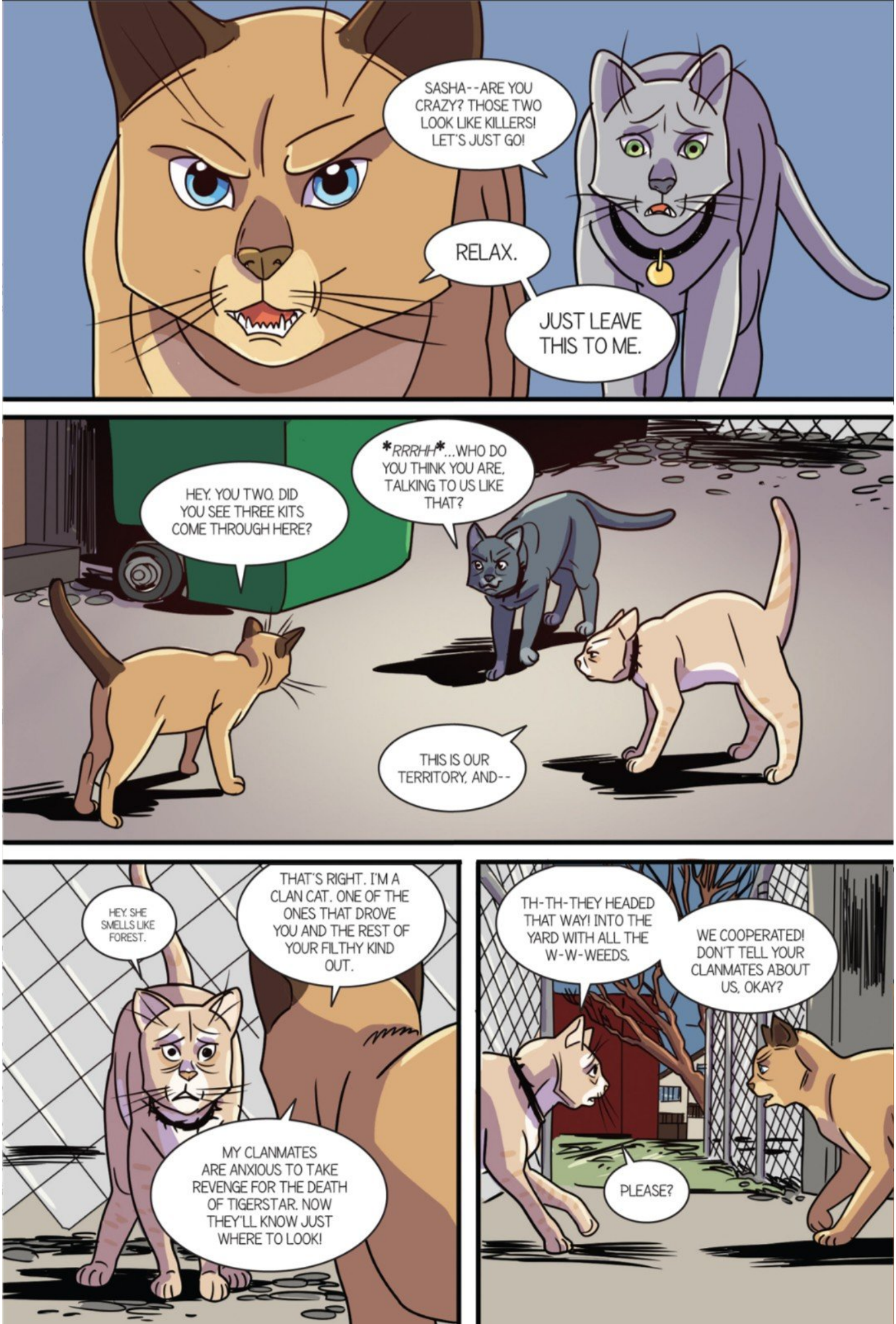
YEAH?
I'M SORRY WE DIDN'T CATCH THE MOUSE.
IT'S ALL RIGHT. I DON'T THINK WE'RE GOING TO GET ANYTHING TO EAT IN HERE, THOUGH. IT'S PROBABLY SAFE TO LEAVE BY NOW.

HEY! THAT THING WE CAME THROUGH--IT'S SHUT!
HOW'RE WE GONNA GET OUT OF HERE?
DON'T WORRY, DON'T WORRY. I'LL TAKE A LOOK AT IT.

IT'S STUCK. I CAN'T... CAN'T SEEM TO GET IT... TO MOVE.

WHAT DO WE DO?
WE'RE TRAPPED IN HERE!

KITS? KITS!
TADPOOOOLE! HAWK! MOTH! CAN YOU HEAR ME?
SHUT UP, YOU STUPID CATS!
ARE WE ON THE RIGHT TRACK? IT'S HARD FOR ME TO TELL.
I THINK WE ARE...
snff snff
...BUT I'M GOING TO TALK TO THOSE TWO. THEY MIGHT'VE SEEN SOMETHING.


SASHA--ARE YOU CRAZY? THOSE TWO LOOK LIKE KILLERS! LET'S JUST GO!
RELAX.
JUST LEAVE THIS TO ME.
HEY. YOU TWO. DID YOU SEE THREE KITS COME THROUGH HERE?
RRRHH...WHO DO YOU THINK YOU ARE, TALKING TO US LIKE THAT?
THIS IS OUR TERRITORY, AND--
HEY. SHE SMELLS LIKE FOREST.
THAT'S RIGHT. I'M A CLAN CAT. ONE OF THE ONES THAT DROVE YOU AND THE REST OF YOUR FILTHY KIND OUT.
MY CLANMATES ARE ANXIOUS TO TAKE REVENGE FOR THE DEATH OF TIGERSTAR. NOW THEY'LL KNOW JUST WHERE TO LOOK!
TH-TH-THEY HEADED THAT WAY! INTO THE YARD WITH ALL THE W-W-WEEDS.
WE COOPERATED! DON'T TELL YOUR CLANMATES ABOUT US, OKAY?
PLEASE?

WELL, LOOK, SEE? IT'S RAINING NOW.
MAYBE IT'S GOOD THAT WE'RE IN HERE. THIS WAY AT LEAST WE WON'T GET WET.
HEY...DO YOU HEAR SOMETHING?
YEAH--I THINK IT'S COMING FROM THAT LONG METAL THING OVER THERE.

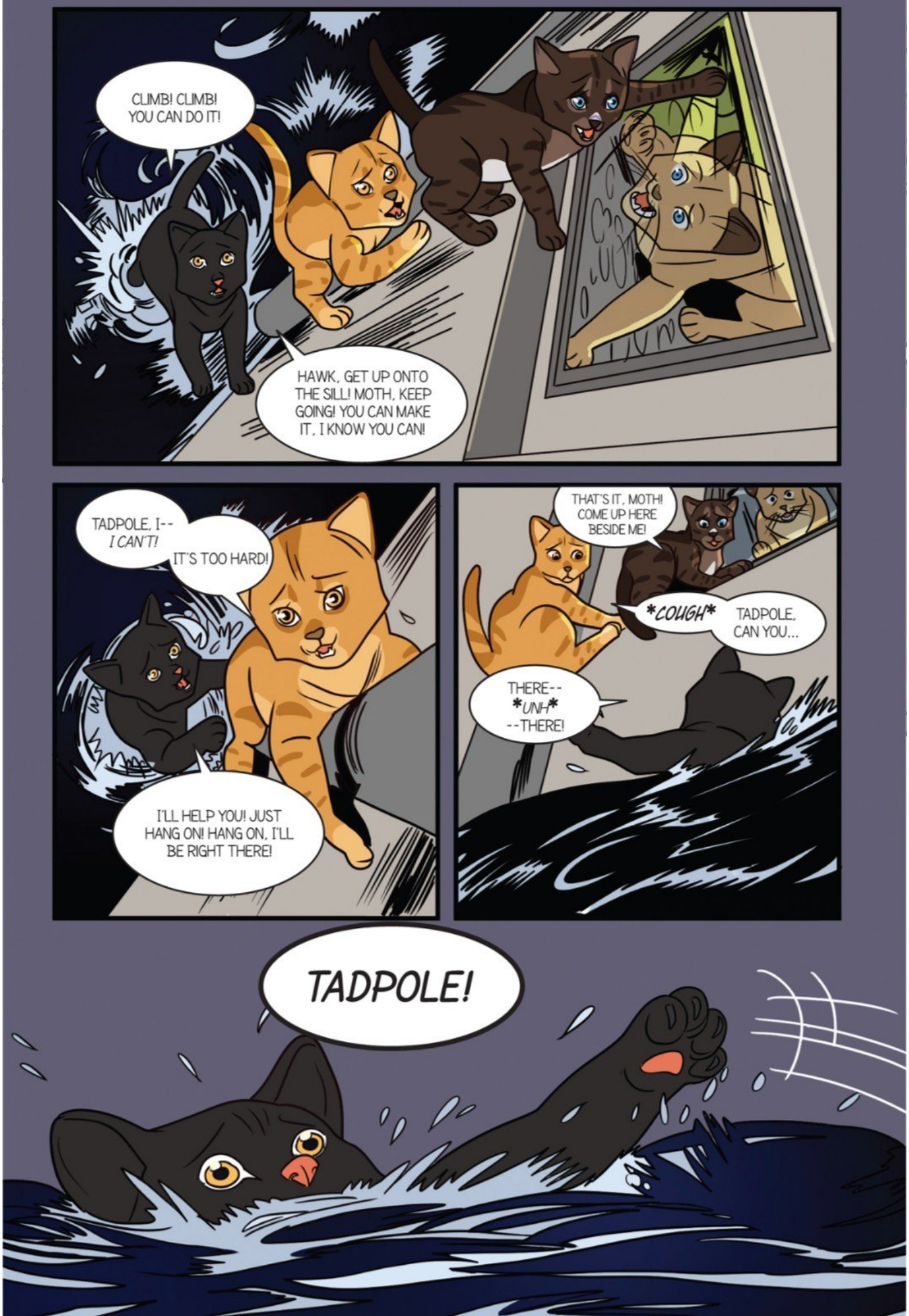
SWSHH
SWSHH
SWSSSH
WHAT IS IT?
TADPOLE?

CLANK
WOOSSSSSSHH

I DON'T UNDERSTAND. THE TRAIL ENDS HERE.
MAYBE THE RAIN'S WASHING IT AWAY?

NO, IT HASN'T BEEN RAINING LONG ENOUGH FOR THAT.
MAYBE THEY--

MAMA!


CLIMB! CLIMB! YOU CAN DO IT!
HAWK, GET UP ONTO THE SILL! MOTH, KEEP GOING! YOU CAN MAKE IT, I KNOW YOU CAN!
TADPOLE, I-- I CAN'T!
IT'S TOO HARD!
I'LL HELP YOU! JUST HANG ON! HANG ON, I'LL BE RIGHT THERE!
THAT'S IT, MOTH! COME UP HERE BESIDE ME!
COUGH
TADPOLE, CAN YOU...
THERE-- *UNH* --THERE!
TADPOLE!

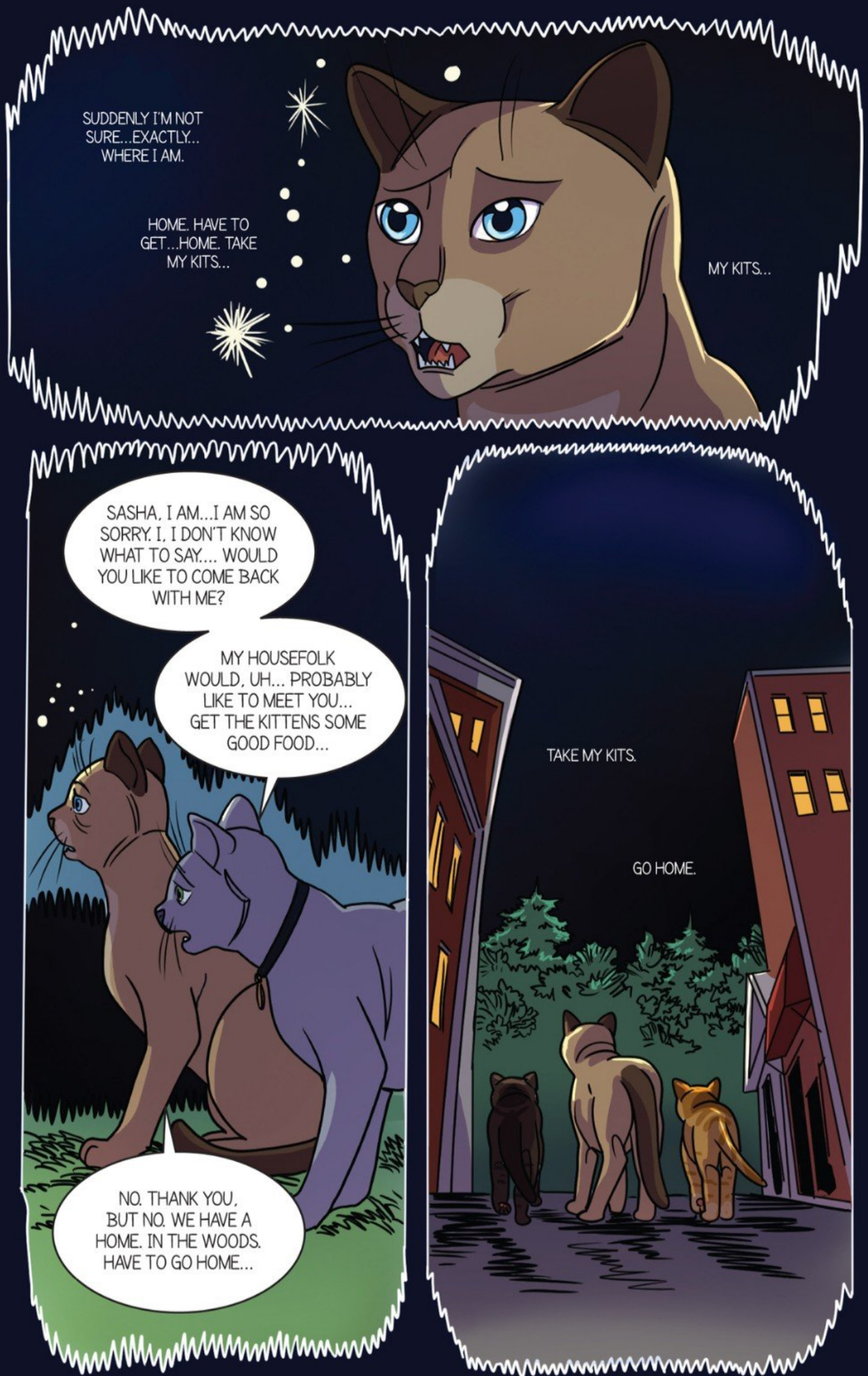
SKREEEAK
CHILDREN! COME ON, GET OUT OF THERE!
MAMA! IT'S TADPOLE! HE'S STILL IN THERE!
HELP HIM, MAMA! HELP HIM, PLEASE, PLEASE!
TADPOLE, GRAB MY PAW!
LOOK AT ME AND GRAB MY PAW, SON! YOU HAVE TO REACH...
...YOU HAVE TO...
...REACH...

THIS HAS TO BE A DREAM.

LET ME GO! HE NEEDS ME! I HAVE TO GO BACK!
I HAVE TO... HAVE T...
HE'S GONE, HAWK. TADPOLE'S GONE.
MY WORDS COME OUT FLAT. HOLLOW. IT CAN'T BE REAL. IT CAN'T BE REAL.

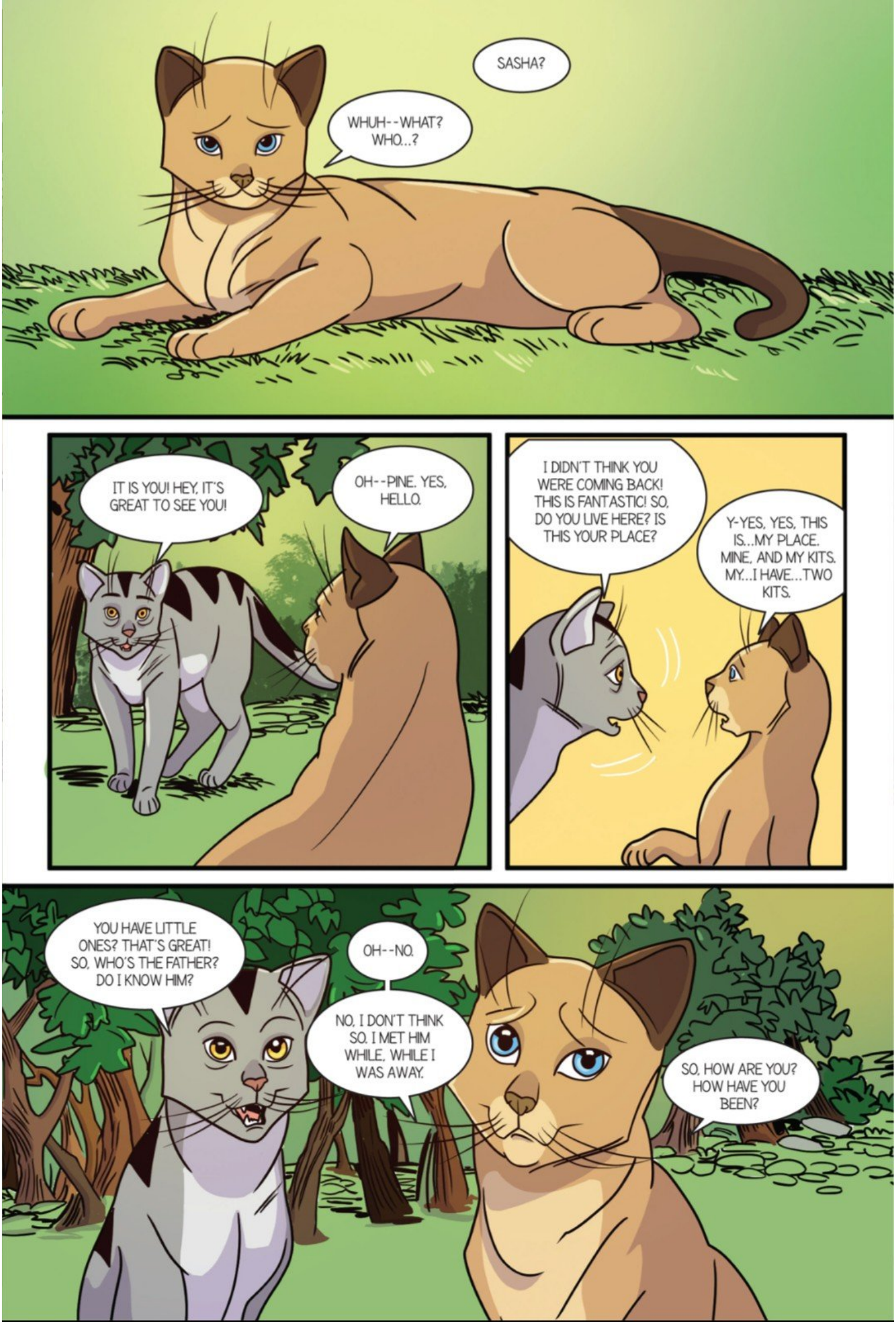
TADPOLE...NOOO, TADPOLE...!
I DON'T UNDERSTAND. MY BEAUTIFUL, SWEET, BRAVE LITTLE KITTEN...
NOOO!

...IS DEAD?

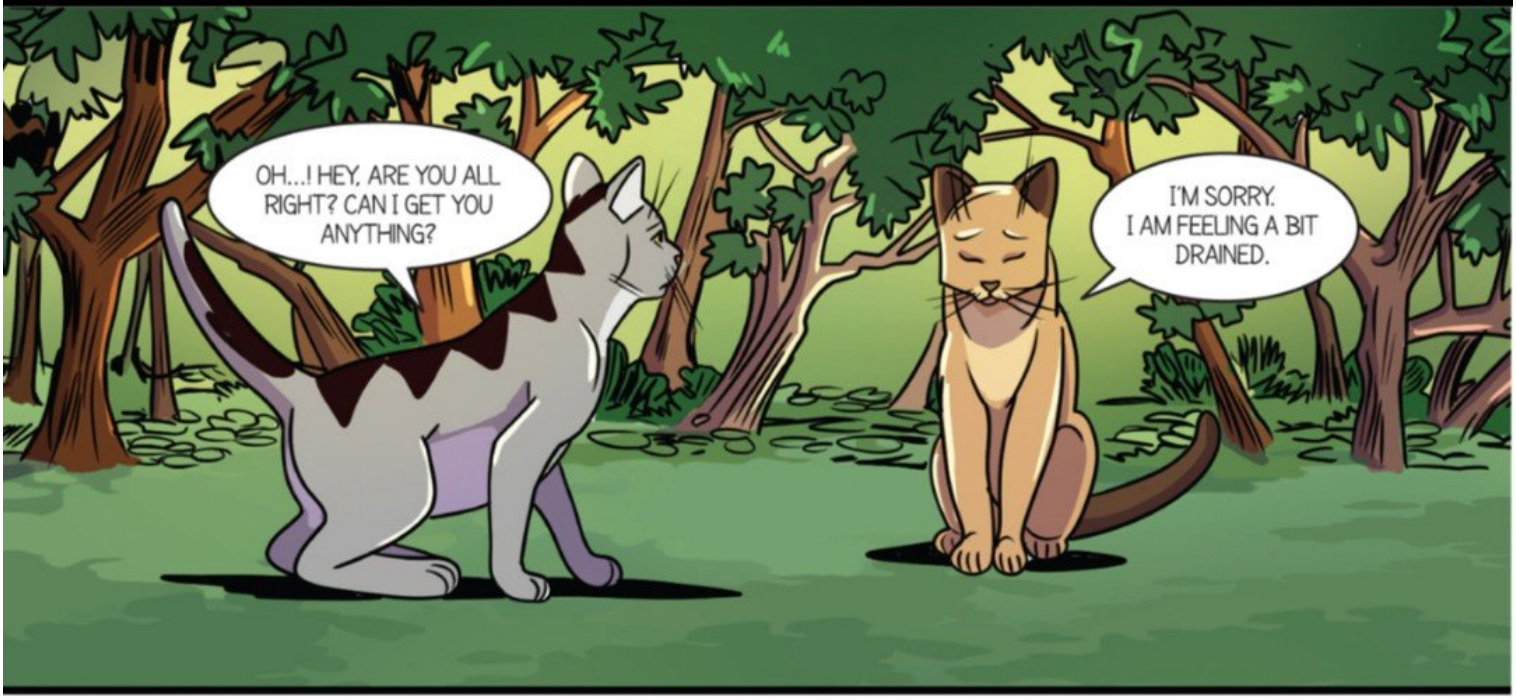

SUDDENLY I'M NOT SURE...EXACTLY... WHERE I AM.
HOME. HAVE TO GET...HOME. TAKE MY KITS...
MY KITS...
SASHA, I AM...I AM SO SORRY. I, I DON'T KNOW WHAT TO SAY.... WOULD YOU LIKE TO COME BACK WITH ME?
MY HOUSEFOLK WOULD, UH... PROBABLY LIKE TO MEET YOU... GET THE KITTENS SOME GOOD FOOD...
NO. THANK YOU, BUT NO. WE HAVE A HOME. IN THE WOODS. HAVE TO GO HOME...
TAKE MY KITS.
GO HOME.

I CAN'T FEEL ANYTHING. NO PAIN...NO HUNGER... NO GRIEF...NOTHING.
I CAN'T GO OUT TO HUNT. ... I CAN'T EVEN SPEAK.
NEITHER HAWK NOR MOTH SEEMS TO WANT TO TALK, THOUGH. I KNOW WE SHOULD...
...BUT FOR NOW I'M GRATEFUL FOR THE SILENCE. I JUST DON'T HAVE THE ENERGY.
I FEEL SLEEP COME FOR ME. I DON'T TRY TO RESIST.
AND I GO TO THE PLACE I ALMOST ALWAYS GO. I'M GLAD HE'S THERE THIS TIME.
TIGERSTAR... YOU KNOW ABOUT TADPOLE?
...YES.
IS HE...IS HE HERE WITH YOU?
NO, SASHA.
BUT HE IS SAFE NOW.

BUT--IS HE--WAIT!
WAIT...
IN THE DAYS AFTER TADPOLE'S ACCIDENT, I START TO FEEL CLOSE TO DEATH MYSELF.
I HAVEN'T EATEN IN SO LONG... AND WHAT LITTLE I CATCH, I GIVE TO HAWK AND MOTH. I'M GETTING WEAKER AND WEAKER.
HOW CAN I FEED MY KITS IF I HAVEN'T THE STRENGTH TO HUNT?
I'VE FAILED. I'M A TERRIBLE MOTHER.
FIRST KEN...THEN TIGERSTAR... AND NOW TADPOLE.
IT'S TOO MUCH. I CAN'T TAKE IT. I JUST...
...I JUST DON'T HAVE ROOM ENOUGH FOR THE HURT.


SASHA?
WHUH--WHAT? WHO...?
IT IS YOU! HEY, IT'S GREAT TO SEE YOU!
OH--PINE. YES, HELLO.
I DIDN'T THINK YOU WERE COMING BACK! THIS IS FANTASTIC! SO, DO YOU LIVE HERE? IS THIS YOUR PLACE?
Y-YES, YES, THIS IS...MY PLACE. MINE, AND MY KITS. MY...I HAVE...TWO KITS.
YOU HAVE LITTLE ONES? THAT'S GREAT! SO, WHO'S THE FATHER? DO I KNOW HIM?
OH--NO.
NO, I DON'T THINK SO. I MET HIM WHILE, WHILE I WAS AWAY.
SO, HOW ARE YOU? HOW HAVE YOU BEEN?

OH, IT'S BEEN SOMETHING, LET ME TELL YOU! YOU GOT OUT OF THE FOREST JUST IN TIME!
YOU KNOW ABOUT THE WHOLE BLOODCLAN THING, HOW THEY TRIED TO TAKE OVER THE FOREST, ALL OF THAT?
I'VE--A LITTLE. I'VE HEARD A LITTLE BIT.
"I WAS THERE! WELL, I DIDN'T FIGHT, OF COURSE, 'CAUSE, Y'KNOW, NOT IN A CLAN, RIGHT? BUT I SAW THE WHOLE THING!"
"THERE WAS THIS HUGE BATTLE, CATS FIGHTING ALL OVER THE PLACE..."
AND THE LEADER OF THE TWOLEGPLACE CATS, RIGHT? WELL, THIS CLAN LEADER, THIS BIG HUGE CAT, WAS ABOUT TO TRY TO KILL HIM...
...AND HE JUMPED--BUT EVEN THOUGH THE OTHER CAT WAS LITTLE, HE HAD SOME KIND OF CRAZY LONG CLAWS...
...AND THE LITTLE ONE JUST RIPPED THAT BIG BROWN CLAN CAT RIGHT OPEN! ALMOST TORE HIM IN HALF!
THAT'S TIGERSTAR--HE'S DESCRIBING TIGERSTAR'S DEATH!
I CAN'T LET PINE KNOW THE TRUTH...!

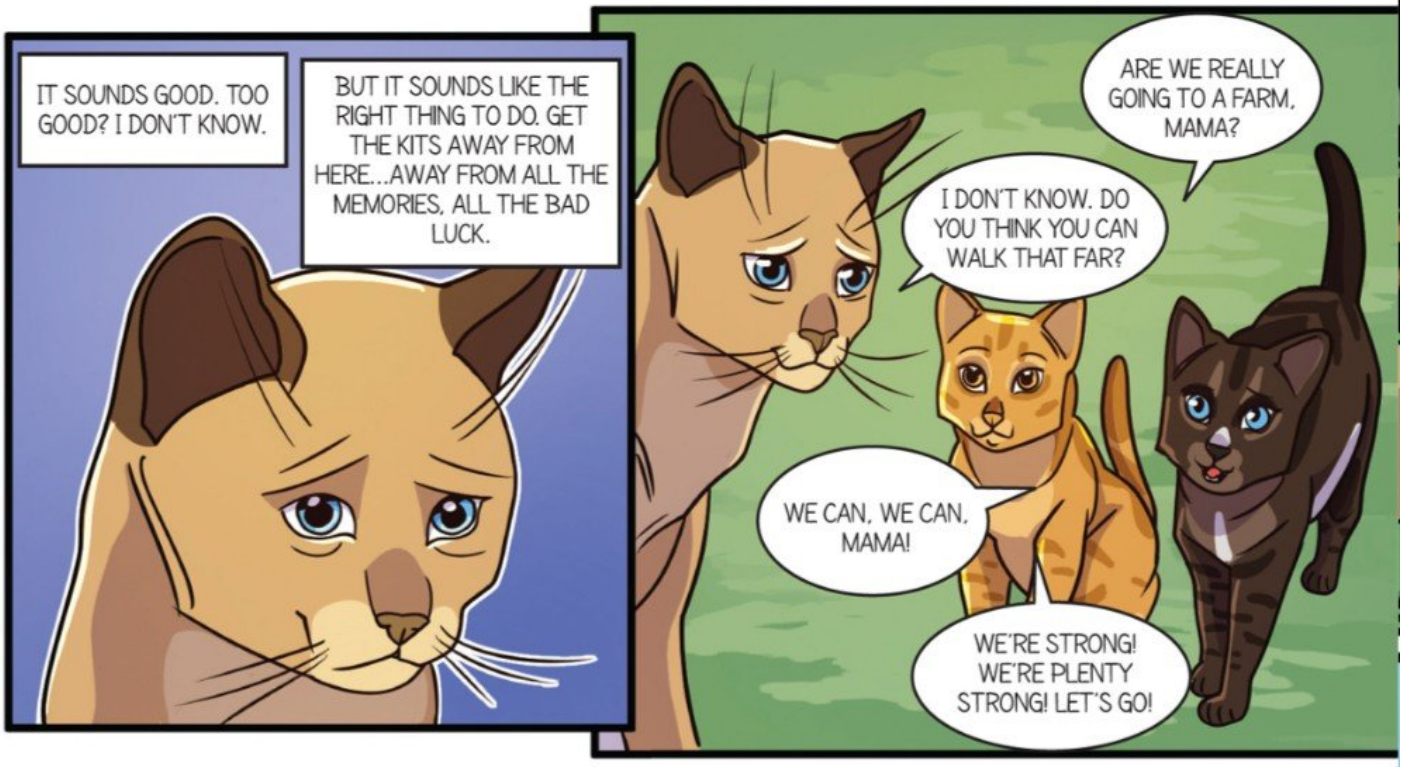

OH...! HEY, ARE YOU ALL RIGHT? CAN I GET YOU ANYTHING?
I'M SORRY. I AM FEELING A BIT DRAINED.

IT'S JUST THAT...WELL...I DON'T FEEL RIGHT ABOUT LEAVING MY KITS. YOU KNOW? BECAUSE OF FOXES AND CLAN CATS.
I'VE JUST BEEN HAVING SORT OF A ROUGH TIME LATELY. IS ALL.

SILENTLY I HOPE PINE DOESN'T SEE HOW CLOSE I AM TO GIVING UP COMPLETELY.

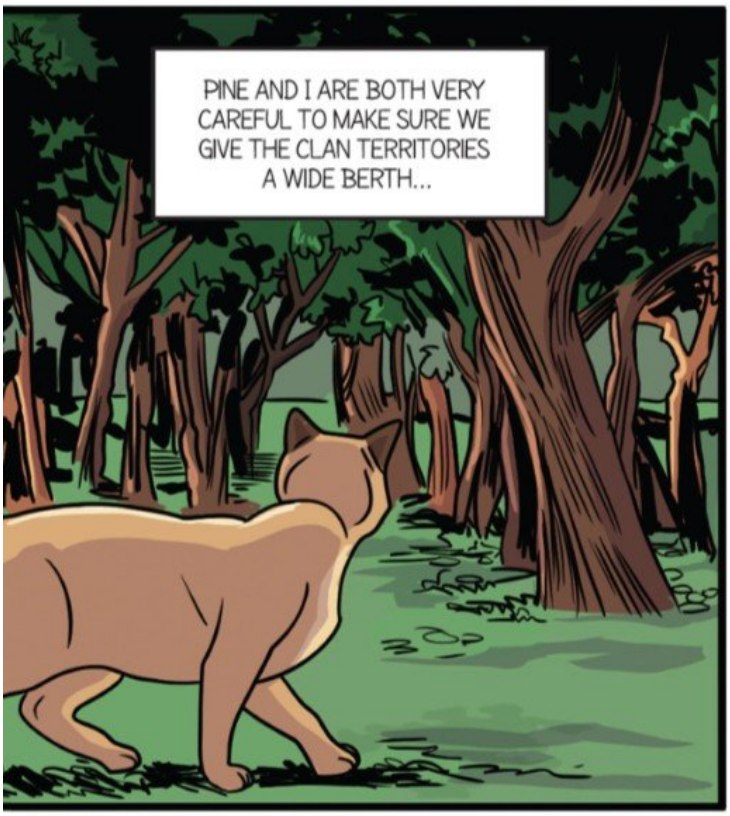
I...I REALIZE, OF COURSE, THAT...UM. I KNOW I'M TOO OLD...AND I'M NOT THAT GREAT AT HUNTING.
WHAT I'M SAYING IS, I KNOW I COULDN'T TAKE CARE OF YOU AND YOUR KITS MYSELF...

...BUT I JUST HAD THE BEST IDEA! LISTEN, THERE'S THIS FARM! I KNOW THE CATS THERE, THEY'RE REALLY FRIENDLY.
AND IT'S ON THE FAR SIDE OF THE RIVER, SO YOU WON'T HAVE SO MUCH TROUBLE FINDING FOOD!
I CAN TAKE YOU THERE! ALL OF YOU! WHAT DO YOU SAY?


IT SOUNDS GOOD. TOO GOOD? I DON'T KNOW.
BUT IT SOUNDS LIKE THE RIGHT THING TO DO. GET THE KITS AWAY FROM HERE...AWAY FROM ALL THE MEMORIES, ALL THE BAD LUCK.
ARE WE REALLY GOING TO A FARM, MAMA?
I DON'T KNOW. DO YOU THINK YOU CAN WALK THAT FAR?
WE CAN, WE CAN, MAMA!
WE'RE STRONG! WE'RE PLENTY STRONG! LET'S GO!

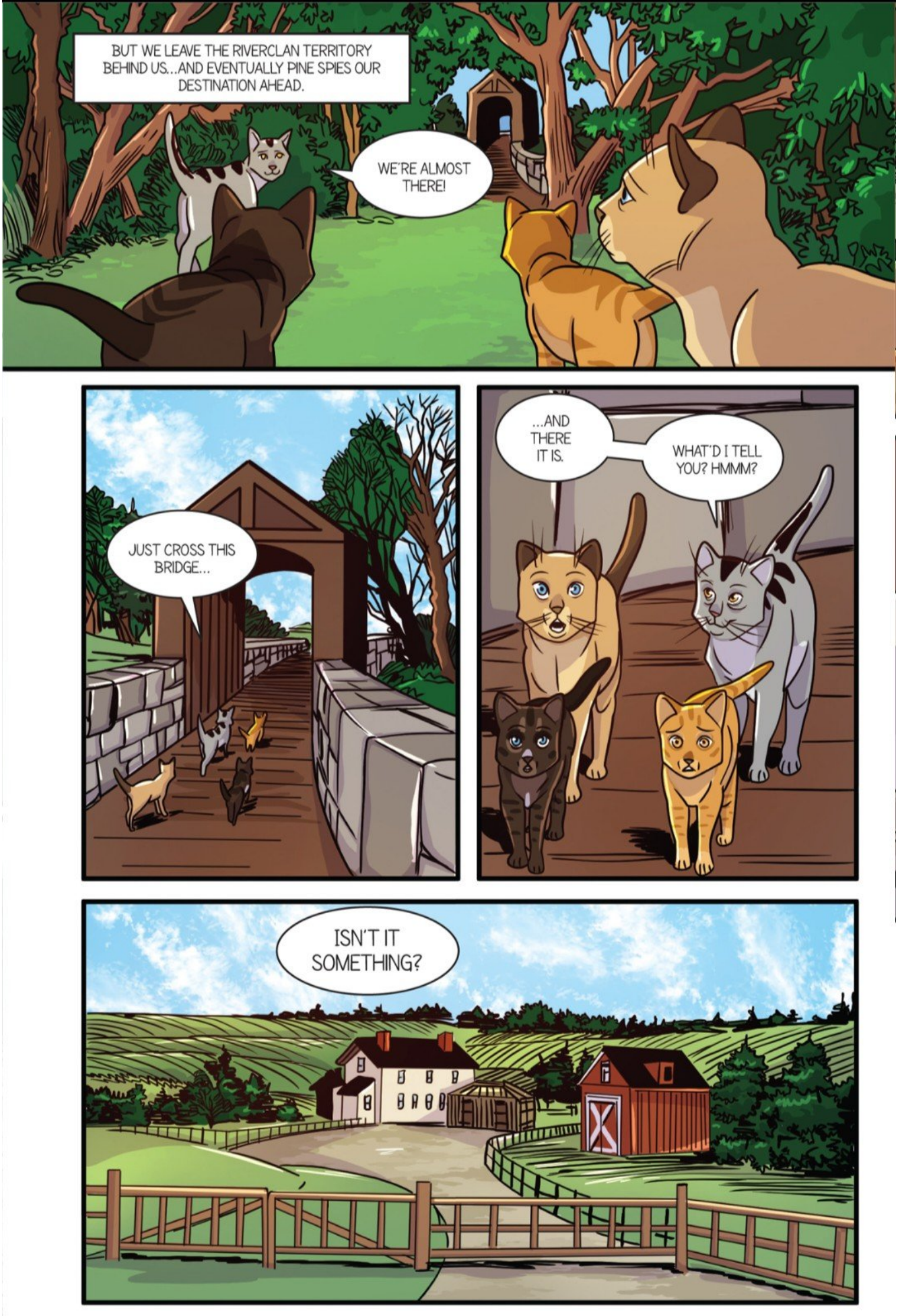
WELL, IT SOUNDS AS IF THE DECISION'S BEEN MADE.
THANK YOU, PINE. I OWE YOU A LOT FOR THIS.

IT FEELS GOOD TO MOVE AGAIN. AND TO HAVE A PLAN.


PINE AND I ARE BOTH VERY CAREFUL TO MAKE SURE WE GIVE THE CLAN TERRITORIES A WIDE BERTH...

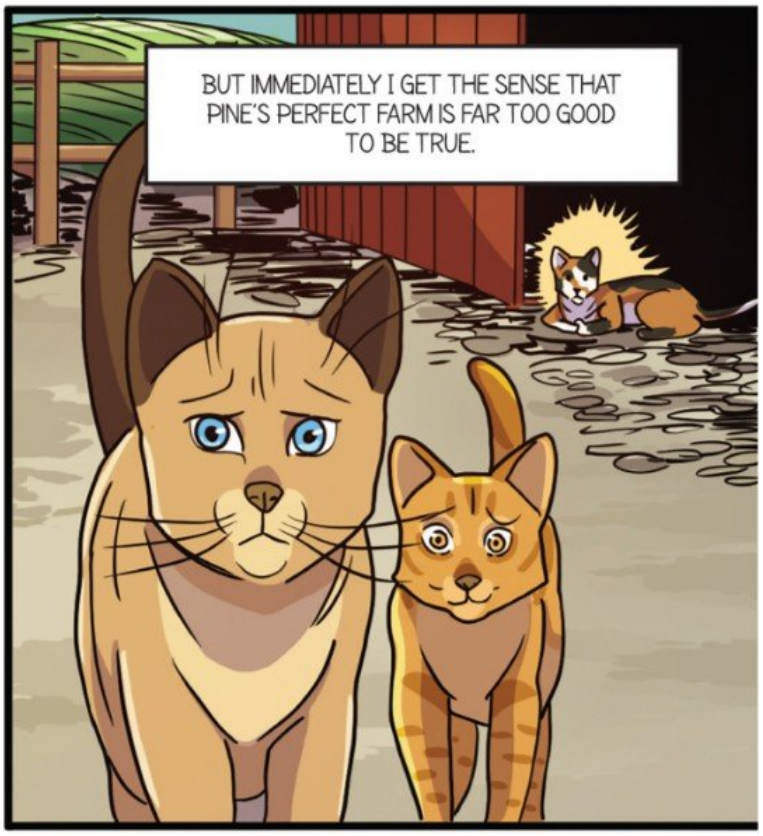
...THOUGH I CAN'T HELP BUT BE CURIOUS ABOUT ONE I'VE NEVER SEEN BEFORE.
WHAT'S OVER THERE, PINE?
HMM? OH--THAT'S THE RIVERCLAN BORDER. THEY'RE BETTER THAN SOME CLAN CATS...BUT THEY'RE STILL CLAN CATS.

IT'S BEAUTIFUL.
I BET I COULD RUN ALL THE WAY ACROSS THE RIVER ON THOSE ROCKS AND NOT GET A BIT WET.

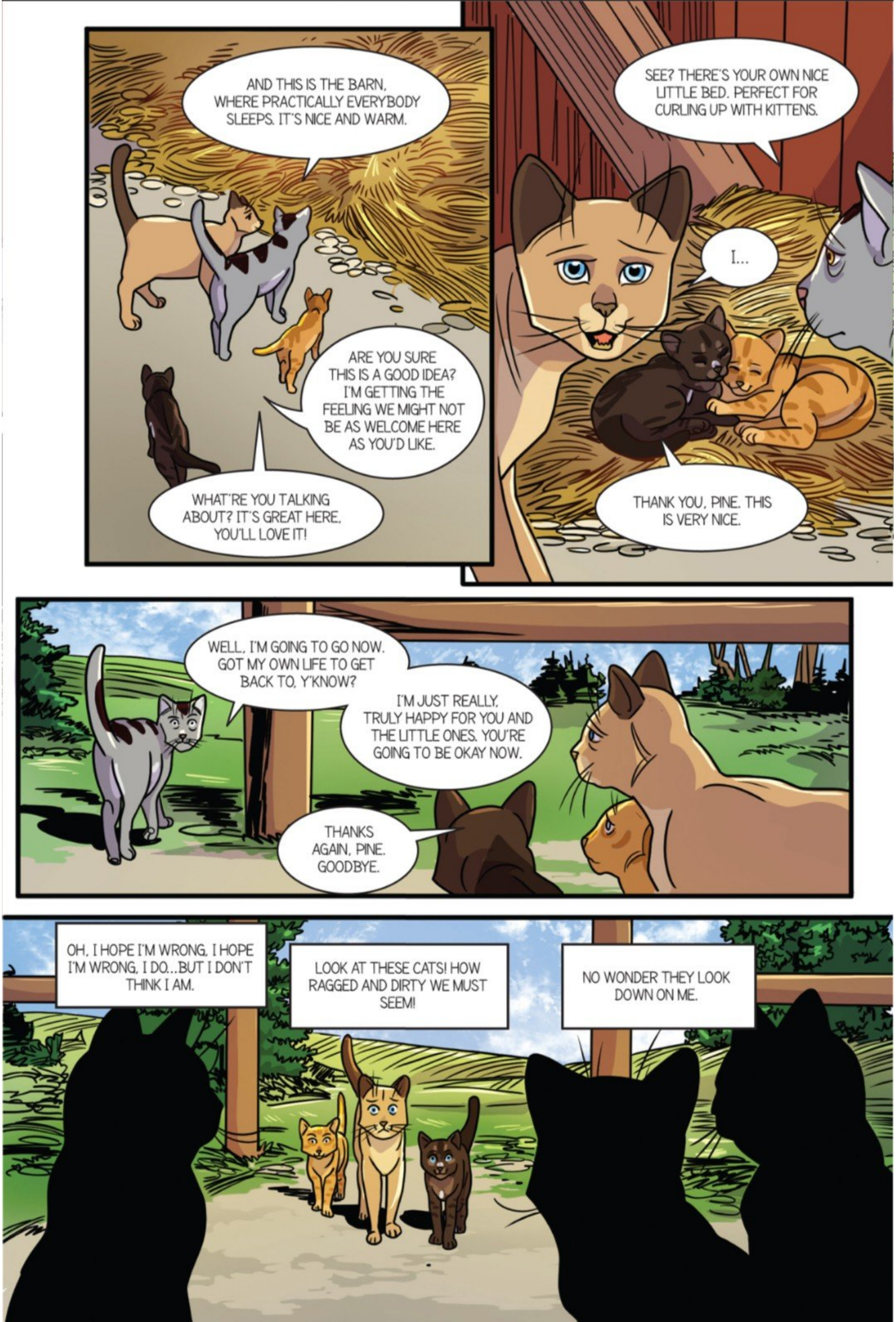

BUT WE LEAVE THE RIVERCLAN TERRITORY BEHIND US...AND EVENTUALLY PINE SPIES OUR DESTINATION AHEAD.
WE'RE ALMOST THERE!
JUST CROSS THIS BRIDGE...
...AND THERE IT IS.
WHAT'D I TELL YOU? HMMM?
ISN'T IT SOMETHING?

HE'S RIGHT. IT IS BEAUTIFUL.
HEY, IT'S PINE!
GOOD TO SEE YOU, PINE!

AND THE CATS DO LOOK VERY HEALTHY HERE.


BUT IMMEDIATELY I GET THE SENSE THAT PINE'S PERFECT FARM IS FAR TOO GOOD TO BE TRUE.

AT LEAST FOR MY KITS AND ME.


AND THIS IS THE BARN, WHERE PRACTICALLY EVERYBODY SLEEPS. IT'S NICE AND WARM.
ARE YOU SURE THIS IS A GOOD IDEA? I'M GETTING THE FEELING WE MIGHT NOT BE AS WELCOME HERE AS YOU'D LIKE.
WHAT'RE YOU TALKING ABOUT? IT'S GREAT HERE. YOU'LL LOVE IT!
SEE? THERE'S YOUR OWN NICE LITTLE BED. PERFECT FOR CURLING UP WITH KITTENS.
I...
THANK YOU, PINE. THIS IS VERY NICE.
WELL, I'M GOING TO GO NOW. GOT MY OWN LIFE TO GET BACK TO, Y'KNOW?
I'M JUST REALLY, TRULY HAPPY FOR YOU AND THE LITTLE ONES. YOU'RE GOING TO BE OKAY NOW.
THANKS AGAIN, PINE. GOODBYE.
OH, I HOPE I'M WRONG, I HOPE I'M WRONG, I DO...BUT I DON'T THINK I AM.
LOOK AT THESE CATS! HOW RAGGED AND DIRTY WE MUST SEEM!
NO WONDER THEY LOOK DOWN ON ME.

ALL RIGHT. NOW THAT PINE'S GONE...IT'S TIME TO GET A FEW THINGS STRAIGHT.
LOOK, WE DON'T WANT ANY TROUBLE...
OH, YOU DON'T WANT ANY TROUBLE? WELL, IT'S TOO LATE FOR THAT.
WE RESPECT PINE. WE'VE KNOWN HIM FOR A LONG TIME. BUT YOU AND YOUR FLEA-BITTEN BROOD?
WE DON'T PUT UP WITH YOUR KIND AROUND HERE. LOOK AT YOU. YOU'RE A DISGRACE. FILTHY, HOMELESS ROGUES.
AS IF WE'D SHARE OUR HUNTING GROUNDS WITH YOU. WE WANT YOU GONE.
AND JUST TO MAKE SURE YOU DON'T COME BACK...
RAOWW! MY EAR!
YOU CUT MY EAR!
MY KITS AND I ARE GOING TO LEAVE AN IMPRESSION FIRST.
HEY!
SEE, MY KITS ARE STRONG. HEALTHY.
TOO BAD YOU WON'T BE STAYING. YOU COULD LEARN A FEW THINGS ABOUT MOTHERHOOD.

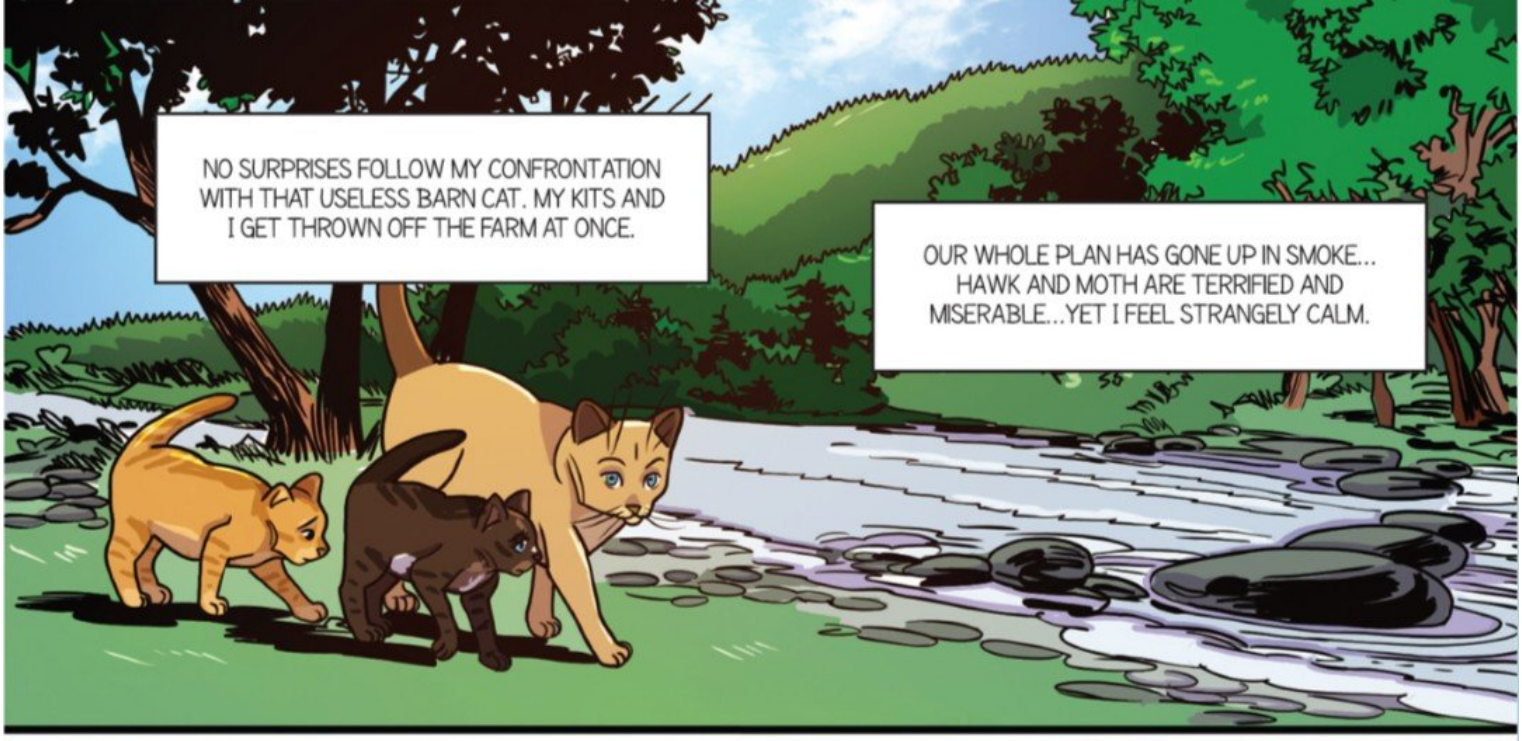
IF YOU KNEW... ANYTHING...ABOUT MOTHERHOOD...
...YOU'D KNOW BETTER THAN TO HURT MY KITS!
WHAMM
HHFFF
SHE DOESN'T EVEN TRY TO DEFEND. IT'S OBVIOUS SHE'S HAD NO TRAINING WHATSOEVER.
RRRHHEEEHHRR!
SLATCH
BUT STARING DOWN AT HER, I REALIZE IT JUST WOULDN'T BE FAIR.
SHE HITS THE GROUND, AND I KNOW I COULD DO IT. RIGHT NOW. I COULD END THIS WORTHLESS EXCUSE FOR A CAT.
THERE'S NO NEED TO MAKE OUR SITUATION ANY WORSE THAN IT ALREADY IS.

BESIDES.
I'VE JUST GIVEN HER A LIFETIME'S WORTH OF HUMILIATION.

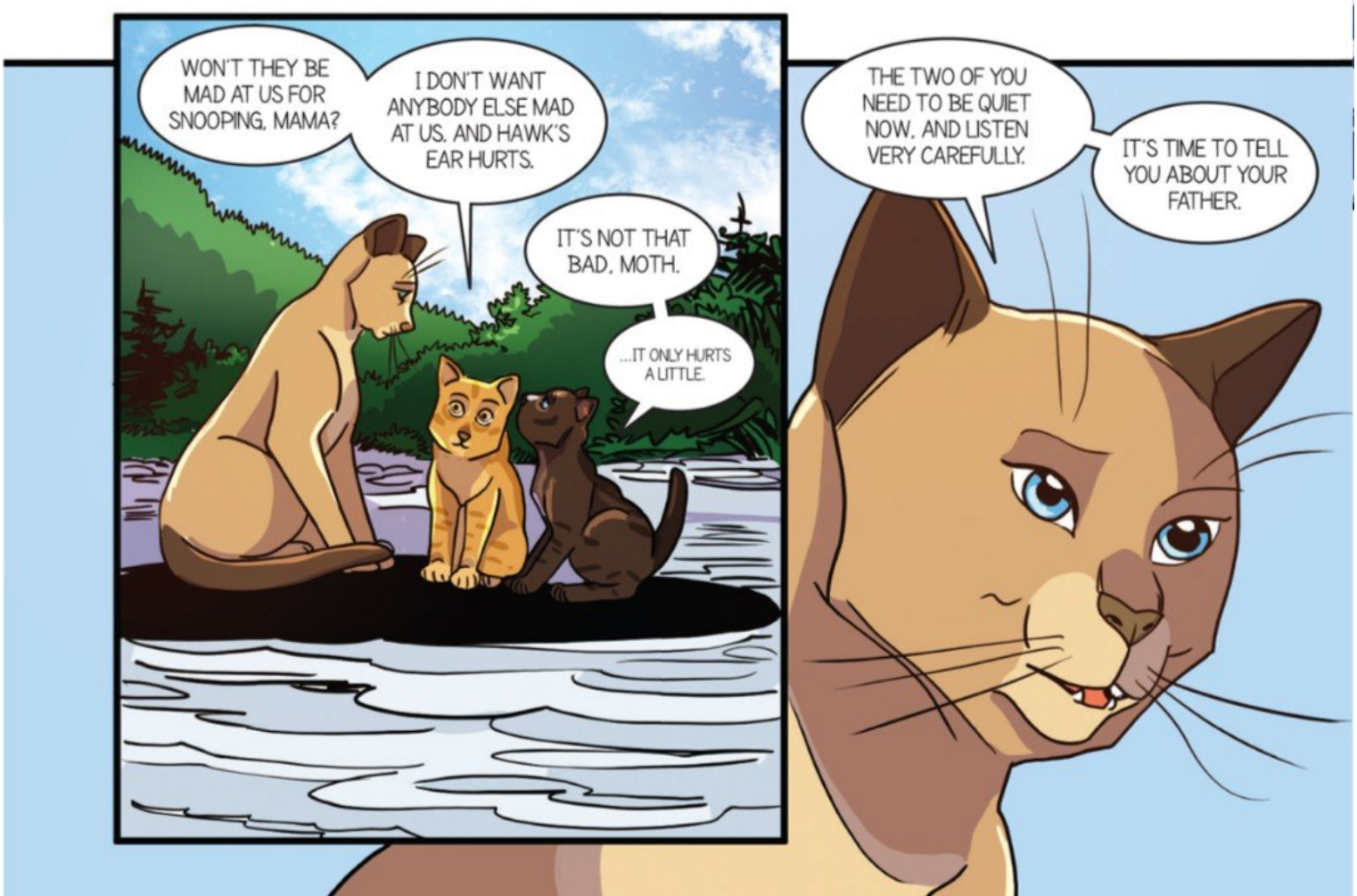
YOU'RE...YOU'RE ONE OF THOSE STUPID WARRIORS, AREN'T YOU?
HER QUESTION TAKES ME OFF GUARD. FOR A FEW HEARTBEATS I'M...I'M NOT SURE.

WARRIORS...AM I A WARRIOR? MY KITS ARE HALFCLAN, BUT... WHAT AM I?
BUT THEN...THEN MY TIME IN SHADOWCLAN COMES BACK TO ME. AND I KNOW.

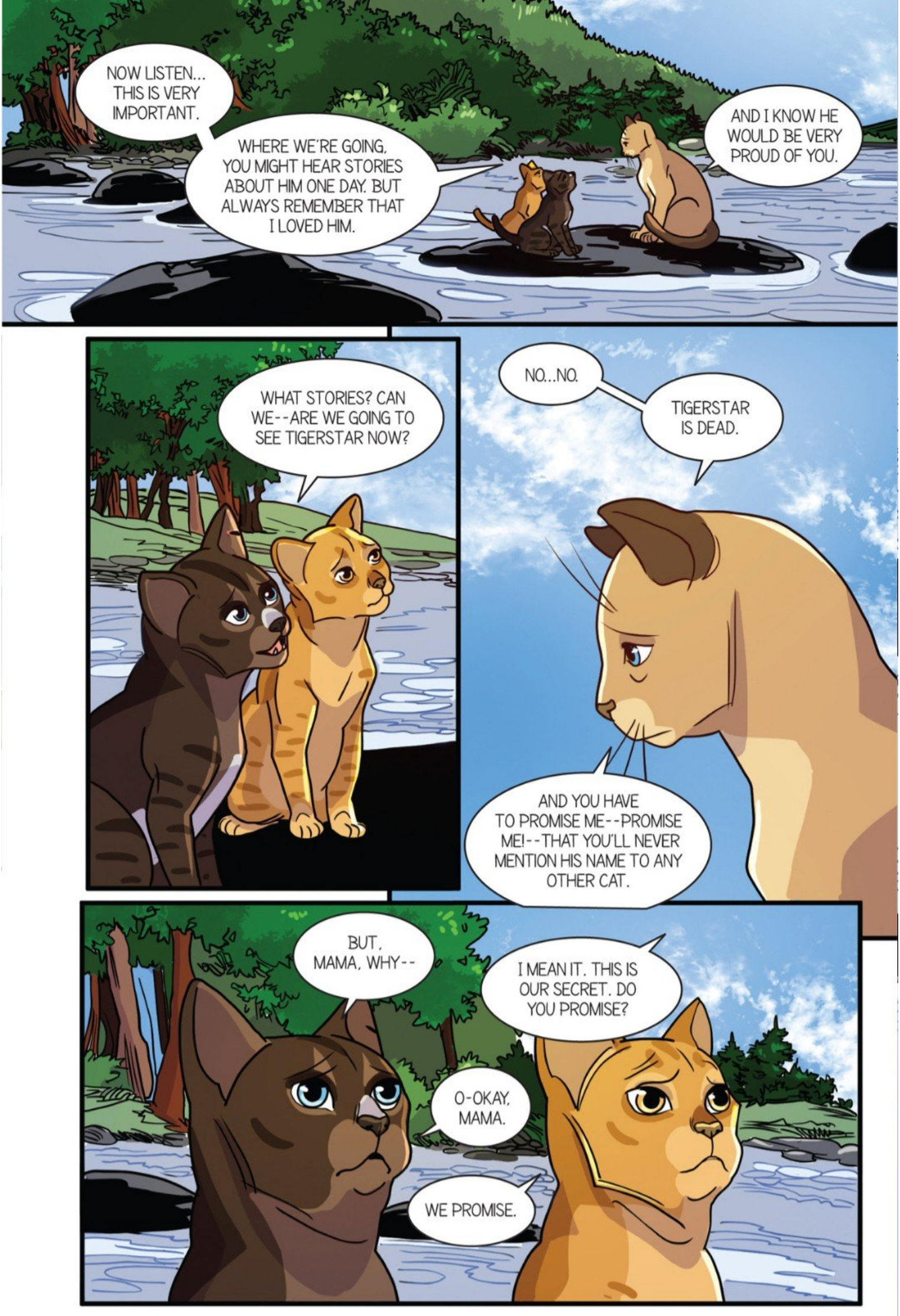
THAT'S RIGHT.
I AM A WARRIOR.


NO SURPRISES FOLLOW MY CONFRONTATION WITH THAT USELESS BARN CAT. MY KITS AND I GET THROWN OFF THE FARM AT ONCE.
OUR WHOLE PLAN HAS GONE UP IN SMOKE... HAWK AND MOTH ARE TERRIFIED AND MISERABLE...YET I FEEL STRANGELY CALM.

BECAUSE, FOR WHATEVER REASON, IT'S BECOME CLEAR TO ME WHAT WE NEED TO DO, AND WHERE WE NEED TO DO IT.
MAMA! MAMA, ISN'T THIS WHERE THE RIVERCLAN CATS ARE?


WON'T THEY BE MAD AT US FOR SNOOPING, MAMA?
I DON'T WANT ANYBODY ELSE MAD AT US. AND HAWK'S EAR HURTS.
IT'S NOT THAT BAD, MOTH.
...IT ONLY HURTS A LITTLE.
THE TWO OF YOU NEED TO BE QUIET NOW, AND LISTEN VERY CAREFULLY.
IT'S TIME TO TELL YOU ABOUT YOUR FATHER.

HIS NAME WAS TIGERSTAR.
"HE WAS A GREAT, STRONG WARRIOR. HE WAS THE LEADER OF SHADOWCLAN..."
"...AND HE WAS THE BRAVEST CAT I EVER MET."
HE ONCE FOUGHT OFF TWO VICIOUS FOXES, BY HIMSELF, TO SAVE MY LIFE.
HEARING ABOUT THEIR FATHER IS HELPING THEM. THAT MUCH IS OBVIOUS.
I JUST HOPE THEY'RE BRAVE ENOUGH TO FACE WHAT'S COMING NEXT.
ALL BY HIMSELF?
WOW...


NOW LISTEN... THIS IS VERY IMPORTANT.
WHERE WE'RE GOING, YOU MIGHT HEAR STORIES ABOUT HIM ONE DAY. BUT ALWAYS REMEMBER THAT I LOVED HIM.
AND I KNOW HE WOULD BE VERY PROUD OF YOU.
WHAT STORIES? CAN WE--ARE WE GOING TO SEE TIGERSTAR NOW?
NO...NO.
TIGERSTAR IS DEAD.
AND YOU HAVE TO PROMISE ME--PROMISE ME!--THAT YOU'LL NEVER MENTION HIS NAME TO ANY OTHER CAT.
BUT, MAMA, WHY--
I MEAN IT. THIS IS OUR SECRET. DO YOU PROMISE?
O-OKAY, MAMA.
WE PROMISE.

UH...MAMA?
I'M NOT CRAZY ABOUT THIS WHOLE IDEA...BUT I'LL DO ANYTHING TO PROVIDE A GOOD HOME FOR MY LITTLE ONES.
AND SINCE THE FARM IS OUT OF THE QUESTION NOW, IT'S NOT AS IF WE HAVE A LOT OF CHOICES.
I AM LEOPARDSTAR, LEADER OF RIVERCLAN. YOU ARE TRESPASSING ON RIVERCLAN TERRITORY.
WHO ARE YOU? AND WHAT DO YOU WANT?
SPEAK!
MY NAME IS SASHA. THESE ARE MY KITS, HAWK AND MOTH.
I'M A ROGUE FALLEN ON HARD TIMES...I'VE ALREADY LOST ONE STRONG KIT THIS LEAF-BARE. WE HAVE NO HOME.
I OFFER MYSELF AND MY KITS UP TO RIVERCLAN.

OFFER YOURSELVES UP... *PFAH!* DON'T TRY TO PUT A PRETTY FACE ON IT. YOU JUST WANT THE CLAN'S PROTECTION.
LEOPARDSTAR, WE DON'T NEED ANOTHER DRAIN ON OUR RESOURCES. YOU SHOULD GET RID OF THEM!
I COULDN'T DISAGREE MORE, BLACKCLAW.
HOW CAN WE TURN THIS POOR THING AWAY? ESPECIALLY AFTER LOSING ONE OF HER KITS?
YOU KNOW...THE CLAN NEEDS NEW WARRIORS. THE NURSERY IS NEARLY EMPTY! WE HAVE TO THINK OF THE CLAN HERE.
IT'S GOOD LUCK THAT STARCLAN HAS BROUGHT THESE ROGUES TO US!
HMMM.

YOUR YOUNG ONES MAY BE SKIN AND BONE...AND MORE THAN A LITTLE RAGGED... BUT THEY LOOK STRONG.
THEY'RE NEARLY SIX MOONS, YES? READY TO BE APPRENTICED.
IS THIS TRULY WHAT YOU WANT? TO BECOME PART OF RIVERCLAN?
YES, LEOPARDSTAR, VERY MUCH.
VERY WELL.
FOLLOW US.
I DON'T KNOW HOW TO FEEL AS WE CROSS OVER THE WATER.
IS THAT ISLAND OUR NEW HOME?

...OR JUST ANOTHER STOP?

EVEN THOUGH IT DOESN'T LOOK THE SAME, THIS PLACE REMINDS ME SO MUCH OF SHADOWCLAN.
IS THAT A GOOD THING? I HOPE SO.

SASHA. HAWK. MOTH.
WELCOME TO RIVERCLAN!
IT'S A LITTLE LIKE A WHIRLWIND, ALL THE NEW CATS, ALL THE NEW NAMES.

FIRST IS RIVERCLAN'S MEDICINE CAT, MUDFUR.
NASTY LITTLE RIP YOU HAVE THERE, HAWK.
IT DOESN'T HURT. I'M TOUGH. I'M NOT SCARED!

NEVER THOUGHT YOU WERE SCARED. WE STILL NEED TO GET IT HEALED, THOUGH, IF YOU'RE GOING TO BE A WARRIOR. RIGHT?
KEEP THIS COBWEB ON IT...AND I'LL GET YOU ALL SOME POPPY SEEDS TO HELP YOU SLEEP.

NEXT STOP, THE NURSERY. THE ONE STORMFUR TALKED ABOUT BEING NEARLY EMPTY.

MISTYFOOT LOOKS AFTER THE KITS. I LIKE HER RIGHT AWAY.
THERE YOU GO...I BET YOU'RE TIRED, AREN'T YOU? JUST TUCK RIGHT IN.
I THINK I'VE DONE THE RIGHT THING. THE KITS ARE HALFCLAN, AFTER ALL. MAYBE THIS IS WHERE THEY'VE ALWAYS BELONGED.

TIGERSTAR ISN'T THERE IN MY DREAM THAT NIGHT. THERE'S ONLY THE TINIEST TRACE OF HIS SCENT.
I MISS HIM...I MISS HIM SO MUCH SOMETIMES.

...AND IN THE MORNING, MY HEART IS SO HEAVY WITH GRIEF AND LONELINESS, IT FEELS LIKE A STONE IN MY CHEST.

I DON'T HAVE TIME TO DWELL ON IT, THOUGH. I LEARN THAT LEOPARDSTAR HAS CALLED A CLAN MEETING.
BEFORE I EVEN REALIZE WHAT'S HAPPENING, MISTYFOOT BRINGS HAWK AND MOTH TO ME...

...AND THEY SHEPHERD US RIGHT UP ONTO THE ROCK NEXT TO LEOPARDSTAR.
TODAY WE WELCOME THREE NEW ADDITIONS TO RIVERCLAN!
HAWK AND MOTH ARE STILL TOO YOUNG, BUT ACCORDING TO OUR TRADITIONS...

...SASHA, YOU NOW HAVE THE CHANCE TO GAIN YOUR OWN WARRIOR NAME.
I SAY I'M NOT READY, BUT IT'S A LIE. I CANNOT TAKE A WARRIOR NAME.

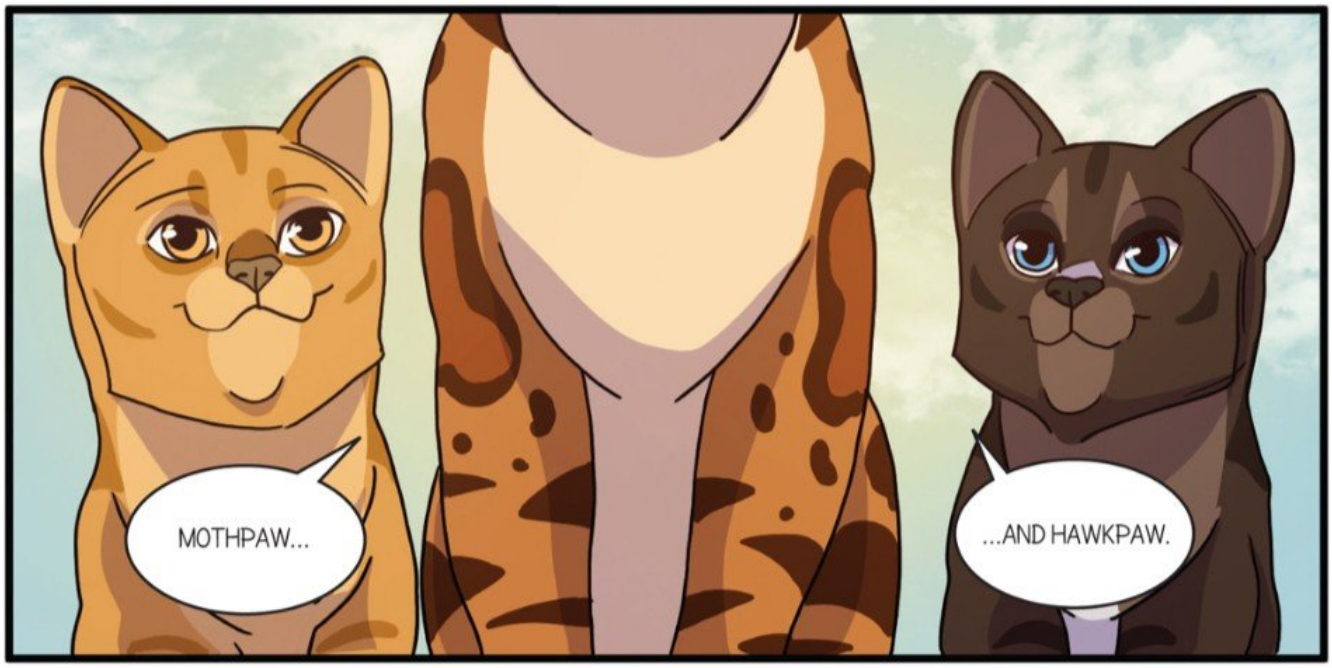
WELL.
WELL, YES, THAT'S QUITE ALL RIGHT. THERE'LL BE PLENTY OF TIME FOR SUCH THINGS.

IT'S PAINFULLY OBVIOUS THAT MY DECISION ISN'T A POPULAR ONE.
AND AS IF THE LOOKS I GET AREN'T ENOUGH...
...SOME OF THEM WHISPER LOUDLY ENOUGH FOR ME TO HEAR THE WORDS.
...OUTSIDERS...HOW DO WE KNOW THEY'LL BE LOYAL?
THEY COULD BE BLOODCLAN SPIES!
LUCKILY FOR US, THE SUSPICION ONLY LASTS A LITTLE WHILE. SOON WE START TO SETTLE IN...
...AND IT'S NOT LONG BEFORE I'M INVITED TO GO HUNTING.

AND ALMOST IMMEDIATELY AFTER THAT, LEOPARDSTAR MAKES THE ANNOUNCEMENT TO THE CLAN:

HAWK AND MOTH ARE BECOMING APPRENTICE WARRIORS.
IT'S EXACTLY WHAT I WANTED FOR THEM.

UNTIL YOUR APPRENTICESHIP ENDS, YOU WILL BE CALLED BY YOUR NEW CLAN NAMES.


MOTHPAW...
...AND HAWKPAW.

HERE...LIKE THIS. WATCH YOUR POSTURE!
THEIR TRAINING BEGINS AT ONCE. LEARNING HOW TO FIGHT...

...HOW TO HUNT...

...AND HOW TO WATCH AND MAINTAIN THE BORDER OF RIVERCLAN TERRITORY.

THEY EVEN SWIM WELL...WHICH IS CRUCIAL, SINCE SO MUCH OF RIVERCLAN'S DIET IS FISH.
I LIKE TO THINK THE SLEEK FUR THEY GOT FROM ME HELPS A BIT.

BUT THEY HARDLY GET STARTED IN THEIR APPRENTICESHIP BEFORE THINGS HIT A SERIOUS SNAG.
RRRHAAHRR! I'M TIGERSTAR! I'M GONNA TAKE OVER THE FOREST AND KILL EVERYBODY!
NUH-UH! WE'RE GONNA STOP YOU!
GET HIM!
RRHOWR! OH NO, I'VE BEEN GUTTED! LIKE A FISH!
TAKE THAT! AND THAT! AND THAT!
THAT KIT...HE'S PRETENDING TO BE... OUR FATHER...?
WHY'D HE SAY THAT ABOUT KILLIN' EVERYBODY?
WHY'D HE SAY THAT?

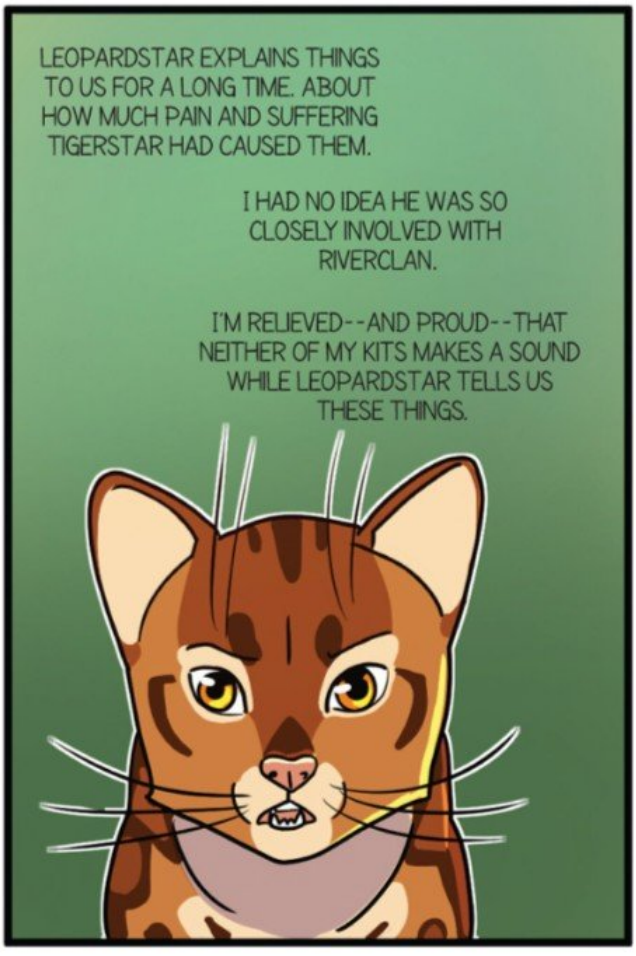
CALM DOWN. BOTH OF YOU.
BUT, BUT, BUT, MAMA--
SSST! YOU HAVE TO CALM DOWN!
BUT THEY WERE ACTING LIKE TIGERSTAR WAS BAD, AND MEAN, AND...
...HE WASN'T REALLY BAD AND MEAN, WAS HE, MAMA? WAS HE?
NOW, YOU BOTH PROMISED ME YOU'D NEVER SAY ANYTHING ABOUT HIM TO ANYBODY. DIDN'T YOU?
...YES...
WELL, PROMISE ME AGAIN. DO YOU PROMISE THAT THIS WILL STAY OUR SECRET? PROMISE ME.
...WE PROMISE.
THEY SAY NASTY THINGS ABOUT HIM, YES.
BUT THESE CATS ONLY SAW ONE SIDE OF TIGERSTAR, THAT'S ALL.
THEY JUST DIDN'T KNOW HIM LIKE I DID.

MY POOR KITS...TO HAVE TO HEAR THE OTHER LITTLE ONES SAY THINGS LIKE THAT...
SASHA! I'D LIKE TO SPEAK WITH YOU FOR A MOMENT.
YES, LEOPARDSTAR?
I SAY THAT I'M IN MOURNING FOR MY LOST KIT TO BUY SOME TIME.
I THINK IT'S TIME WE GAVE YOU YOUR WARRIOR NAME.
THE GATHERING IS COMING UP SOON, WHEN ALL FOUR CLANS GATHER AT FOURTREES. WE COULD DO IT THEN.
BUT YOU'RE A CONTRIBUTING MEMBER OF RIVERCLAN NOW, SASHA. ...YOU SHOULD HAVE A WARRIOR'S NAME.
WHAT DO I DO NOW? I'D ALL BUT FORGOTTEN ABOUT THIS NAMING.
AND IF I GO TO A GATHERING, SHADOWCLAN WILL RECOGNIZE ME. THEY'LL TELL EVERYONE...AND MY KITS WILL BE IN DANGER!

DAYS GO BY, AND MY INSIDES TWIST UP TIGHTER AND TIGHTER...AND THEN ONE MORNING IT ALL GETS EVEN WORSE.
HEY--LOOK AT THIS!
WHAT? WHAT IS IT?
I THINK IT'S A BONE. HEY, THERE'S A LOT OF THEM!
THAT WAS A GOOD ONE! IT FLIPPED UP HIGH!
OOH, WATCH THIS ONE ROLL!
CAN'T GRAB THIS ONE!
CAN TOO! LEMME HAVE IT!

I CAN ONLY IMAGINE WHAT EVERYONE THOUGHT WHEN THEY SAW MY KITS.

YOU HAVE TO UNDERSTAND--ALL OF YOU--THAT THAT AREA OF THE CAMP IS ABANDONED FOR A REASON.
WHAT YOU FOUND, CHILDREN, WERE THE REMNANTS OF TIGERSTAR'S HILL OF BONES.
THAT'S WHERE HE FORCED HALFCLAN CATS TO FIGHT EACH OTHER TO THE DEATH.


LEOPARDSTAR EXPLAINS THINGS TO US FOR A LONG TIME. ABOUT HOW MUCH PAIN AND SUFFERING TIGERSTAR HAD CAUSED THEM.
I HAD NO IDEA HE WAS SO CLOSELY INVOLVED WITH RIVERCLAN.
I'M RELIEVED--AND PROUD--THAT NEITHER OF MY KITS MAKES A SOUND WHILE LEOPARDSTAR TELLS US THESE THINGS.

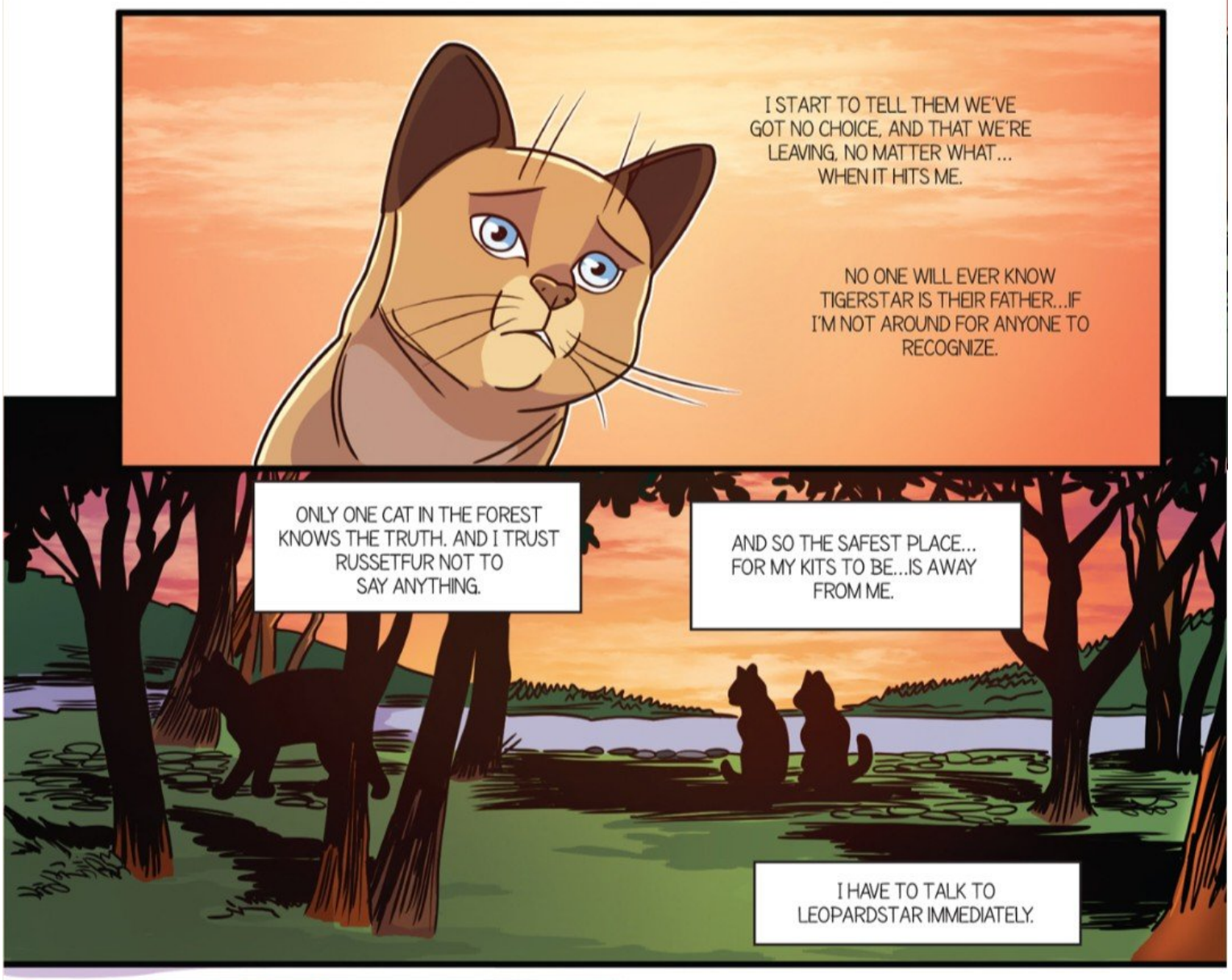
I WAS GOING TO FIGURE OUT SOME REASON NOT TO GO TO THE GATHERING.
I THOUGHT I COULD KEEP THE SECRET OF MY KITS' FATHER AS LONG AS I COULD STAY AWAY FROM SHADOWCLAN.
BUT NOW...

NOW I KNOW WE CAN'T STAY HERE. HAWKPAW AND MOTHPAW ARE TOO VULNERABLE.
I DON'T LOOK FORWARD TO TELLING THEM.

I...HAVE TO TELL YOU BOTH SOMETHING...AND IT'S NOT GOING TO BE EASY TO HEAR.
WE CAN'T STAY IN RIVERCLAN. WE HAVE TO LEAVE, AND GO BACK TO LIVING IN THE WOODS. IT'S NOT SAFE HERE ANYMORE.

NO! NO! I DON'T WANT TO LEAVE! I WANT TO STAY, AND BE A WARRIOR! MAMA--MAMA, DON'T MAKE ME LEAVE...!
MAMA, I CAN'T LEAVE HAWK. I MADE A PROMISE.
IF HE STAYS...I NEED TO STAY, TOO.

WE WON'T MENTION TIGERSTAR'S NAME.
AND...IF WE DON'T TELL... HOW ELSE WOULD ANY CAT FIND OUT WHO OUR FATHER WAS?
WE WON'T, EVER!


I START TO TELL THEM WE'VE GOT NO CHOICE, AND THAT WE'RE LEAVING, NO MATTER WHAT... WHEN IT HITS ME.
NO ONE WILL EVER KNOW TIGERSTAR IS THEIR FATHER...IF I'M NOT AROUND FOR ANYONE TO RECOGNIZE.
ONLY ONE CAT IN THE FOREST KNOWS THE TRUTH. AND I TRUST RUSSETFUR NOT TO SAY ANYTHING.
AND SO THE SAFEST PLACE... FOR MY KITS TO BE...IS AWAY FROM ME.
I HAVE TO TALK TO LEOPARDSTAR IMMEDIATELY.

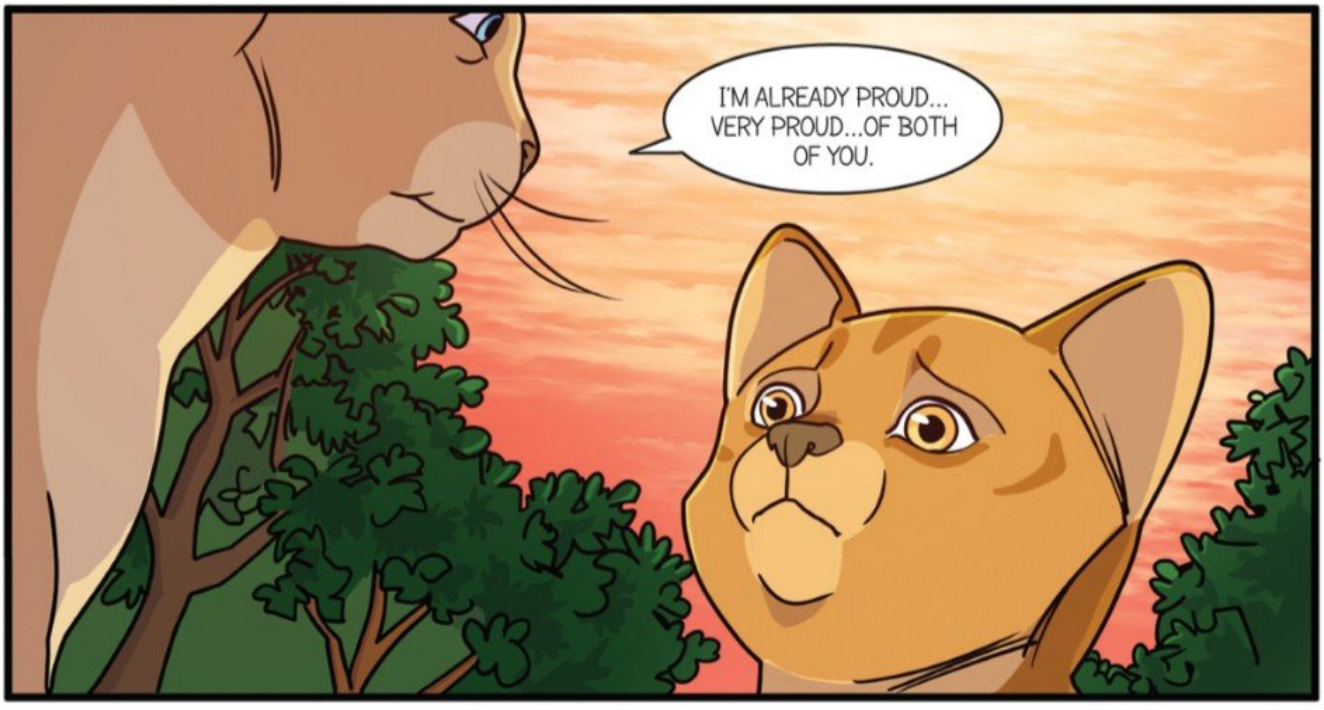
WELL, LEOPARDSTAR...YOU SEE...I'M SORRY, THIS IS HARD FOR ME TO SAY. I OWE YOU SO MUCH.
BUT LIVING BY THE WARRIOR CODE ISN'T FOR ME. HAWKPAW AND MOTHPAW WILL STAY.
BUT I THINK IT WOULD BE BEST THAT I GO.

I DON'T WANT TO LOSE YOU, SASHA. BUT... I KNOW MY CATS.
WITH ALL THE SUSPICIONS AMONG THEM NOW, I DON'T KNOW THAT YOU'D HAVE EVER BEEN TRULY ACCEPTED.
YOU HAVE MY APPROVAL TO LEAVE. AND MY THANKS...FOR LETTING THE TWO LITTLE ONES STAY WITH US.

I HAVE TO GO NOW, MY SWEET KITS.
I'LL MISS YOU BOTH... MORE THAN I CAN SAY... BUT I KNOW YOU'LL GROW UP TO BE GREAT CLAN WARRIORS.

I'LL MAKE YOU PROUD, MAMA. YOU'LL SEE.
I KNOW YOU, WILL... HAWKPAW.

I WISH YOU DIDN'T HAVE TO GO, MAMA. I LOVE YOU.


I'M ALREADY PROUD... VERY PROUD...OF BOTH OF YOU.

THERE GO THE TWO HALVES OF MY HEART.
IT'S KILLING ME TO LEAVE THEM BEHIND.
BUT I KNOW THEY'LL BE STRONG...
...BECAUSE THEIR FATHER'S BLOOD RUNS IN THEIR VEINS.
AND EVEN THOUGH HE LEFT ME IN MY DREAMS, AT THIS MOMENT I CAN FEEL HIM...TIGERSTAR...SITTING RIGHT BEHIND ME.

AND AS I TURN TO GO, HIS VOICE COMES TO ME... WHISPERING IN MY EARS AND IN MY MIND.
"I AM PROUD OF MY CHILDREN."
"THEY WILL MAKE GREAT WARRIORS. AND I WILL WATCH OVER THEM FOREVER."
"I PROMISE."
THE END

ERIN HUNTER

is inspired by a love of cats and a fascination with the ferocity of the natural world. She is the author of the Warriors, Seekers, Survivors, Bravelands, and Bamboo Kingdom series. Erin lives in the UK.

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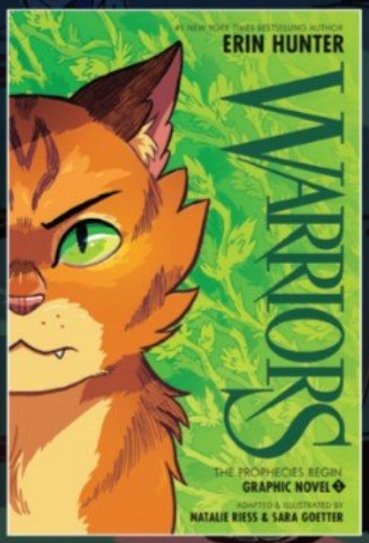
When Sasha is forced to leave her kittypet home, she must forge a solitary new life in the forest. Then she meets Tigerstar, leader of ShadowClan, and wonders whether she would be better off joining the ranks of his forest Clan.

But Tigerstar has many secrets, and Sasha isn't sure she can trust him. Will she wander alone forever? And where does she belong?

This volume includes all three books in the Tigerstar and Sasha trilogy—now in full color for the first time!

DON'T MISS MORE WARRIORS GRAPHIC NOVELS:



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A WORKING PARTNERS BOOK

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